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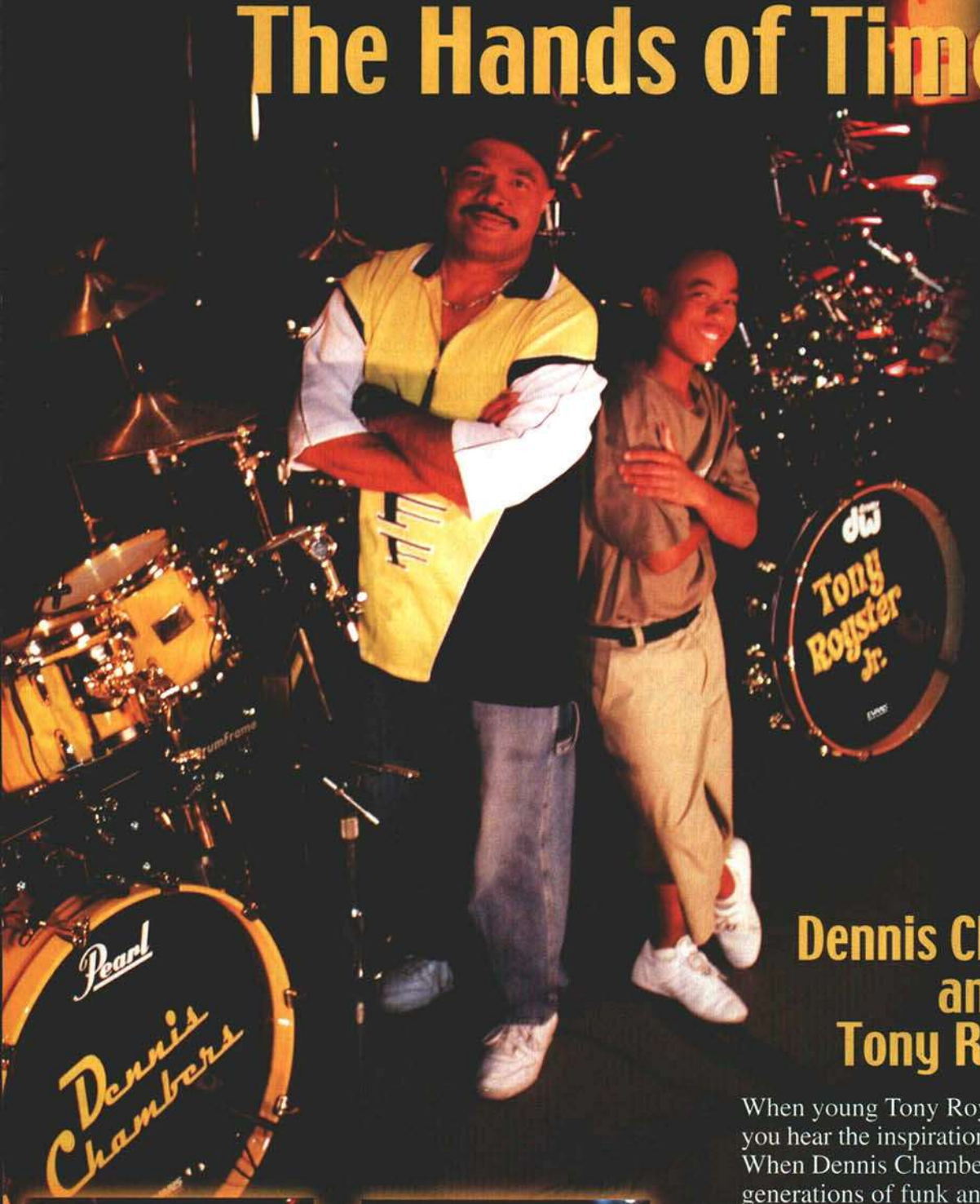
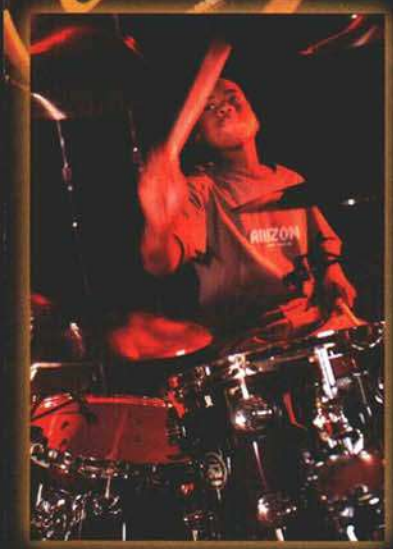


Dennis Chambers and Tony Royster

When young Tony Royster plays the drums, you hear the inspiration of Dennis Chambers. When Dennis Chambers plays, you hear generations of funk and jazz drummers who went before him. Their kinship runs deep. Their touch is powerful and their spirit playful.

Like Tony and Dennis, respect your roots and the sounds that came before you. And never lose the youthful exuberance of discovering new sounds. Let Evans drumheads be your gateway.



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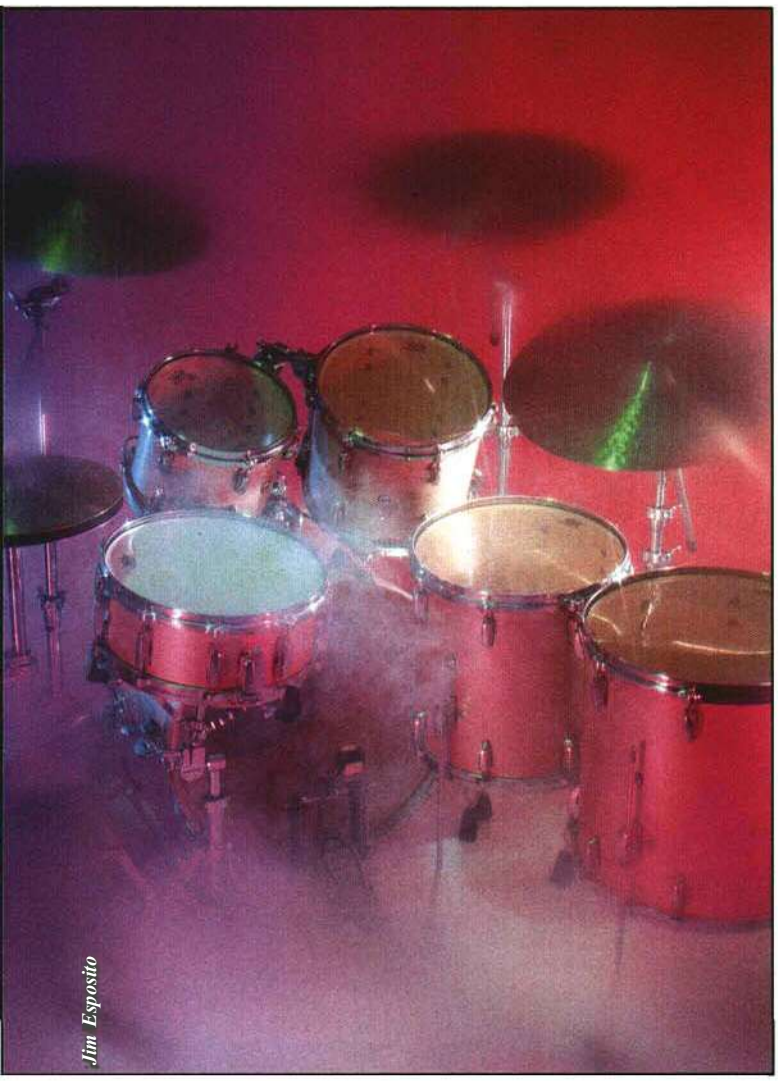
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A New, Cool Me In NYC

One of my main gigs is this real interesting Appalachian art rock trio—banjo, bass, drums. I approach it kinda like Levon Helm playing with Tom Waits, or Ringo with Captain Beefheart. Leastwise that's what I tell people—you know, so they think I'm artsy *and* soulful.

Image is everything in New York.

Recently we had two gigs in clubs where I was told there was a house kit. Any city drummer will tell you this is a double-edged sword. Good because parking and loading a drumkit in and out of Manhattan clubs tends to just plain suck. Bad because the house kits in city clubs tend to just plain suck.

Avoiding sucky situations is everything in New York.

My own kit is tuned thumpy but present: coated double-ply heads on toms, open but controlled 22" bass drum, medium-tension snare with the snares off all the time, thin, extra-dry cymbals. What are the chances the house kit in both clubs will be similar to mine? So now you know where I'm going with this.

We get to The Knitting Factory, where we're playing in the room that's two stories underground. I'm thinking, This kit is gonna have to be pretty damn bad to make me wish I schlepped *mine* here tonight.

Given the itchy avant-jazz bands that usually play The Knit, I should've known what to expect. Four-piece kit, 12" rack, 14" floor, both with single-ply coated heads, tuned way high. And what's with this 20" bass drum? Tight, single-ply heads front *and* back, a big ol' hole in the front, and no padding in sight. Jazz...rock...what are these guys going for here? The new "drummer's wing" at Bellevue, apparently.

Two weeks later, Arlene Grocery. A groovy Lower East Side scene specializing in bitchy rock bands. Drummer translation: dead, dead, dead house kit. Remo Pinstripes on every oversized drum. Bass drum sound: "bip." After soundcheck, the soundman goes, "Uh, drummer, you're playing too loud, like a rock drummer in a folk group. I have to take you out of the house system." The bandleader gets pissed; he's on a personal crusade to make people think the banjo can rock, and every soundman automatically goes into "folk head" when we take the stage. *I'm* pissed because how the hell is anyone gonna hear this punching bag of a bass drum now?

Ah, screw it. No sense in getting upset. We're here to have fun! At The Knit I pretend to be Joey Baron and oink, splurf, and screeeee my way through the set. A little more Beefheart and a little less Ringo. At Arlene I happily take mallets to the toms and make lots of sounds spelled with soft "u's." A little more Levon, a little less Tom Waits.

Both gigs were pretty frickin' okay.

Because dealing with a crazy environment and pretending to be a new, cool you is everything in New York.

Adam Budofsky

MODERN DRUMMER

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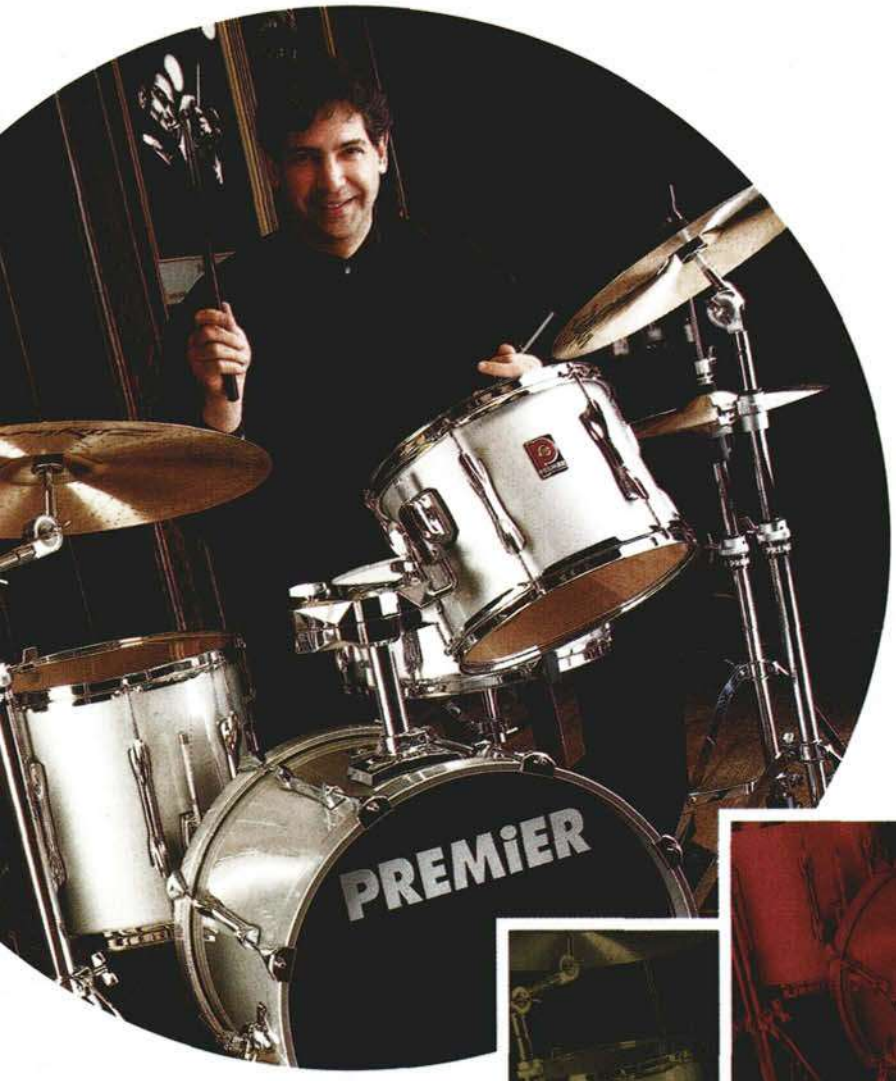

Premier Cabria Jazz Quartet shown in Metallic Silver with 2000 Series hardware pack #5846.

Played by Danny Gottlieb

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JEFF "TAIN" WATTS

Well, I had to wait practically the entire year of 1999 to see a cover story on today's most important jazz drummer: Jeff "Tain" Watts. But your November '99 feature was worth the wait. It went a long way to present Jeff's personality and attitude. Those, to me, are the keys to his playing, rather than any element of drum technique. There's no doubt in my mind that Tain's combination of funky street smarts and jazz-history intellectualism make him the point man for where jazz must go to evolve and survive.

A. Wanamaker
Chicago, IL

Your jazz features often focus on the drummer's concepts, rather than on how he actually executes what he plays. Your cover story on Jeff Watts was a nice compromise between the two. Jeff had plenty of opportunity to expound on his musical philosophy. But author Ken Micallef also got him to describe his studies, his practice techniques, and other technical aspects of his playing. This made for a very illuminating piece. Thanks!

Tom Franks
San Diego, CA

MD's GUIDE TO DRUMSET TUNING

Thanks to *Modern Drummer* and Rich Watson for the November'99 issue's informative article on drumset tuning. I especially found the section on general tuning very helpful. I tried some suggestions on my kit and was extremely happy with the results. It's nice to read suggestions that really work!

John Kiernan
via Internet

I read just a little of the November '99 "MD's Guide To Drumset Tuning." After the first page and a half of text (which took about two minutes), I went downstairs and tuned my seven-piece Arbiter AT single-screw drums. In the time it would have taken to finish the article, my set was tuned to perfection—and I still had time for a quick polish.

I occasionally miss my beloved ten-piece Gretsch kit, with its 180-plus tension lugs. But when your article reminded me of what I'm *not* missing, I got that smug look of someone who knows something that no one else does.

Jeff Goodman
Eagan, MN

ART BLAKEY ON TRACK

I enjoyed Mark Griffith's knowledgeable and perceptive *Artist On Track* retrospective on Art Blakey in your October and November '99 issues. I especially appreciated his analysis of the famous Blakey press roll. Many drummers make the mistake of always ending this roll with a rimshot. But Art's coolest effect, in my opinion, was to simply go back to the ride cymbal. (It's like taking a big bite of cotton candy: There's a burst of flavor, then all of a sudden, it's just...gone!)

For reasons incomprehensible to me, Blakey does not get the respect he deserves from many younger drummers. *MD* must take a share of the blame: In your list of the top twenty-five drum albums a while back there was *nothing* from Art Blakey! I will accept Mark Griffith's excellent articles as partial atonement.

To my fellow readers: If you haven't heard Art's music, by all means check it out! You pretty much can't go wrong with anything by the Jazz Messengers on the Blue Note label.

George Nichols
via Internet

VINNIE'S REFLECTIONS

I commend your November '99 *Reflections* interview with Vinnie Colaiuta. Considering what a spectacular drummer he is himself, Vinnie shows incredible class in every comment he makes about his peers. To coin a phrase, this is certainly a "lesson in humility" for all drummers. I am continually impressed by the masters who praise others without one iota of criticism. Excellent job Vinnie and *MD*.

Scott Ickes
Upland, CA

CONSUMER POLL THANKS

This is a belated thank you to the readers *of Modern Drummer* for the regard they showed to Roland Electronics in MD's 1999 Consumers Poll. On behalf of our entire organization, please know that we appreciate this recognition. Roland has worked hard to carve its niche in electronic percussion. It is gratifying to know that the readers *of Modern Drummer* feel so strongly about our company and our products. You can be sure that the plaques commemorating this recognition will be prominently displayed at Roland's headquarters.

Dennis M. Houlihan
President, Roland Corporation US
Los Angeles, CA

HURRICANE HELP

As you know, Hurricane Floyd hit the Carolinas recently, creating some of the worst destruction the area has ever seen. Along with thousands of homes, many businesses were destroyed as well. One of those was Sunset Music, a family-owned business whose Rocky Mount and Goldsboro, North Carolina locations were basically wiped out! Inventory and essential business equipment was all lost to the floods.

Premier Percussion, Pintech Electronics, and Pork Pie Percussion have come together to help Sunset Music. They've sent merchandise at no charge to the store in order to help them get back on their feet. It's heartwarming to know that major percussion companies can forget competition in

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order to help someone in a time of crisis. I'm proud to be associated with these companies, and to know that even today there *are* more important things than making a buck!

Rick Murray
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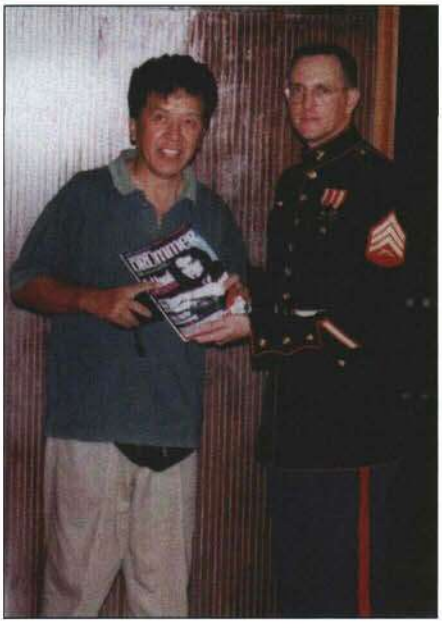
Charlotte, NC

DRUMS ACROSS THE PACIFIC



While touring the South Pacific with the USMC Marine Forces Pacific Band, I had the pleasure of meeting the gentleman shown with me in the photo above. He was running the sound for our performances in Fiji.

He struck up a conversation with me by inquiring about the brands of drums we use. He also asked me about my drumming influences. Then he mentioned Steve Gadd, Dennis Chambers, and a few other notable drummers as his own favorites.

I asked him if he read *Modern Drummer,* and he said he didn't. So at our performance that evening, I gave him my June '99 issue. It felt good to give him what will hopefully become a source of knowledge and inspiration. But I was equally glad to learn that Western drummers are inspiring drummers throughout the world, the way that "world drumming" is influencing us in the States.

It really is a small world.

Shawn Stewart
Sergeant, USMC
Kaneohe Bay, HI

PAISTE CLARIFICATION

This is to let the readers of *Modern Drummer* know that there has been an oversight in a Paiste advertisement featuring endorser Fran Breen. The ad appeared in the October 1999 issue.

Our "Artist Profile" series gives Paiste artists an opportunity to feature some current project that they are involved with, such as a new CD or tour. Mr. Breen chose to promote his current tour work with Lucinda Williams.

In the process of transmitting Mr. Breen's information through our California office and ultimately to the advertisement design bureau, a mistake occurred. The information was inserted as if Mr. Breen had played on Ms. Williams' *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road* CD, rather than on her tour. In fact, the drummer on that entire CD was Donald Lindley. We sincerely regret this error, especially in light of Mr. Lindley's recent passing. Our apologies go out to his family and friends.

We hope any confusion that this error has caused within the drum community can be resolved with this letter. If anyone has questions or concerns, they can call me directly at the Paiste America office, at (800) 472-4783.

Paul Presson
Marketing Coordinator, Paiste America
Brea, CA

CORRECTION

The December '99 *Ask A Pro* department featured a question to John Tempesta, which John answered at length. Unfortunately, a printing error omitted the headline of the item, including John's name. We apologize to John and to our readers for the error.

HOW TO REACH US

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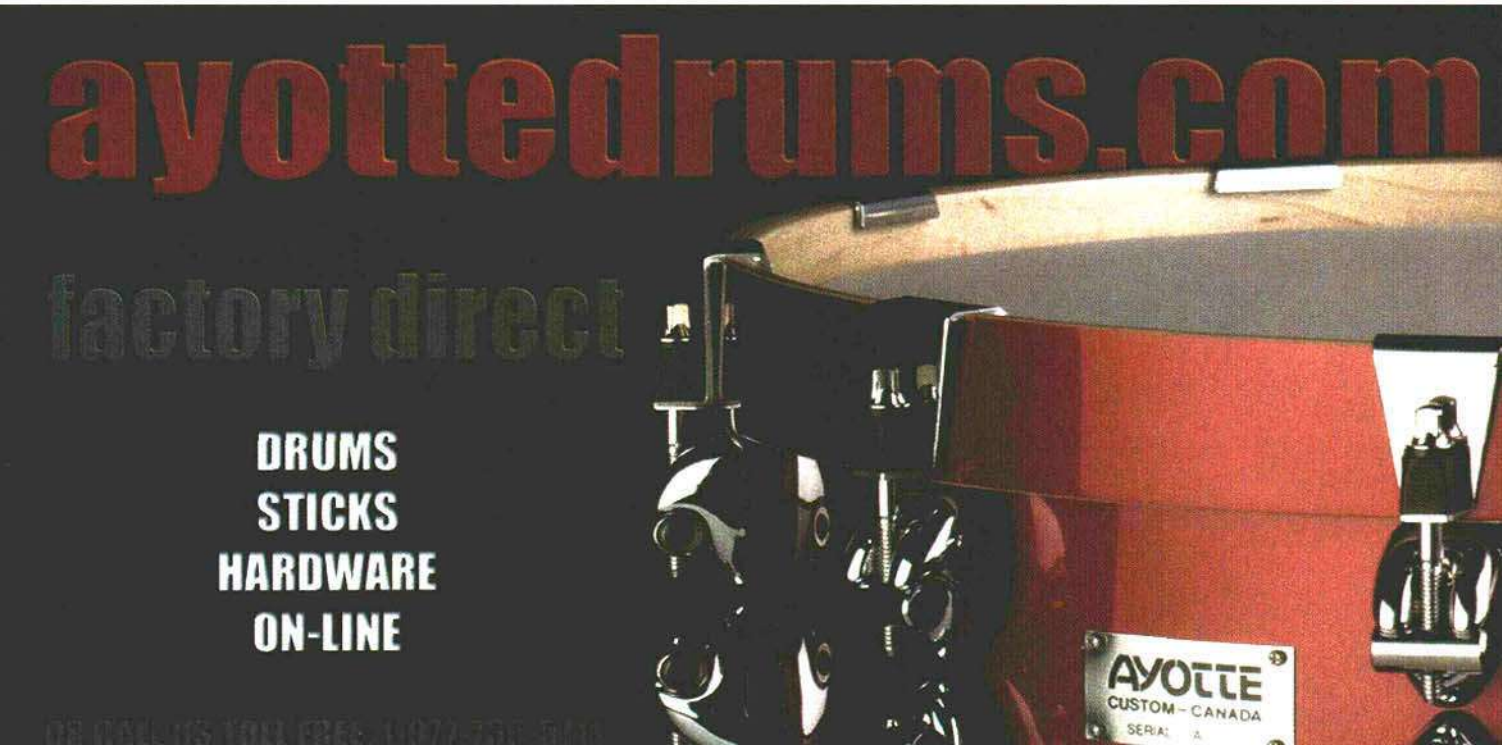

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Oh yeah, about the free gear. (After all, that's why you stopped to read this ad, right?) Every day, until the boss comes to his senses, we're giving away gear. Not last year's left-handed kazoo, but cool stuff you'll actually be happy to win, like Mackie mixers and Roland keyboards. Just go to **www.zZounds.com/free** and find out what we're giving away today.

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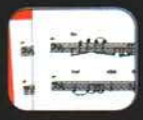
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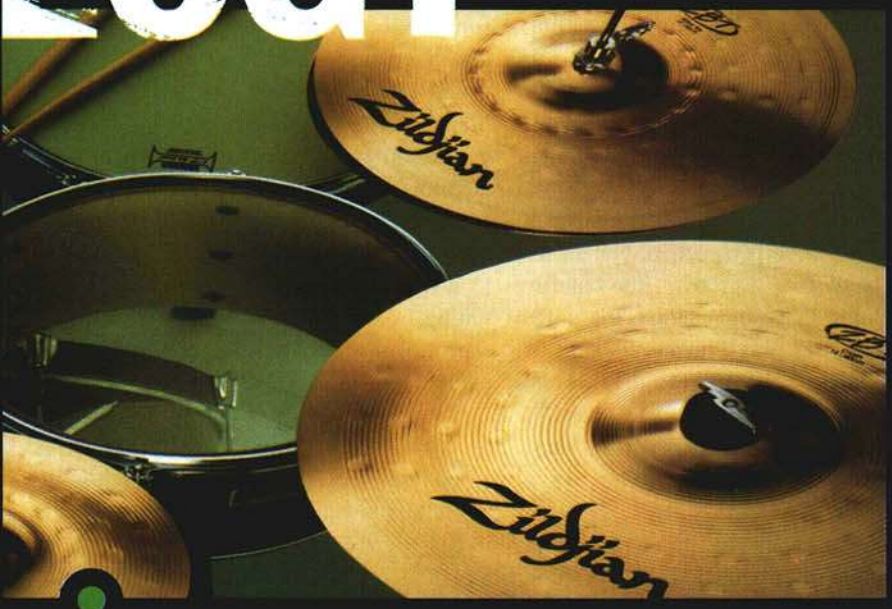

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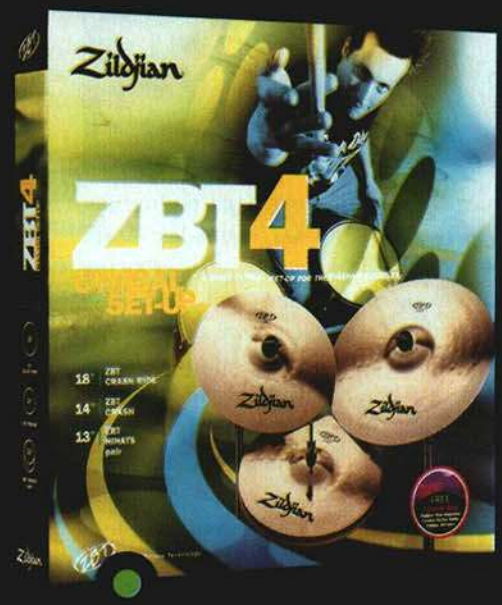


Box Sets & Beyond

Matched ZBT and ZBT-PLUS set-ups are a great place to start.

Fear Factory's Raymond Herrera Plays Fast And Loose

Q You are one of my favorite drummers. What amazes me is that while you are playing your fast double-bass chops (as on *Self Bias Resistor)* you look very relaxed. It's as if you were playing something fairly easy—which anyone can tell you're *not.* Could you suggest some exercises to develop that awesome combination of speed and relaxation?

Jaime Sucre
via Internet

A Thanks for your compliments. You're right; I tend to move less—and look more relaxed—on the faster stuff we play than on the more groove-oriented songs. I generally move more on the grooving parts to get more "feel" into it. I keep my body still on the fast stuff for two reasons. The first is for endurance: If I move around too much I'll tire out. The other reason is to keep my parts more precise.

As far as exercises go, I work both on and off the drumkit. Off the kit, I do a lot of jogging and bike riding. I do anything I can to push my endurance, because for me our shows are not just about playing the drums, but playing them for an hour and a half, full-out.

On the drums, one of the things I do is called "question/answer," which is just to play something on the snare and then try to mimic it with my feet. I also like to come up with patterns played with my feet, and just try to keep a sustained, grooving beat going with them. Thanks for your questions!

Dave Weckl On Tempo And Tuning

Q I saw you and your band performing in Buenos Aires, Argentina last April. I was totally blown away by your grooving style, syncopated rhythms, and great sense of dynamics. I was even more surprised by your sense of tempo while you were soloing over a vamp that the rest of the band was playing. Can you explain how you keep the tempo in your mind while you are soloing? Also, could you explain how you tune your drums? Thank you for such inspiration.

Alexis Perepelycia
via Internet

A Thanks for such kind words about me and the band. We had a great time in Argentina, because the audience was especially warm and appreciative.

While soloing over a vamp, I *always* keep the quarter-note pulse internally. Then I usually try to play things that fit into that pulse with as much feel and groove as possible. I try to tell a little story of repetitive phrases, employing dynamic and sonic contrast, while finally building the solo to a climax. Some players tend to just "play freely" over a vamp, which to me is not the most musical approach. It doesn't seem to convey as much emotional content.

My advice is to approach this kind of a solo from a groove perspective. Not so far as actually *playing* a groove—the band is already doing that—but placing the notes and phrases you play "in the pocket" of what the band is playing. In other words, make it feel good and play it in time. As Buzz Feiten, the guitarist in my band, says, "It's no fun when the drummer plays 'stump the band'!"

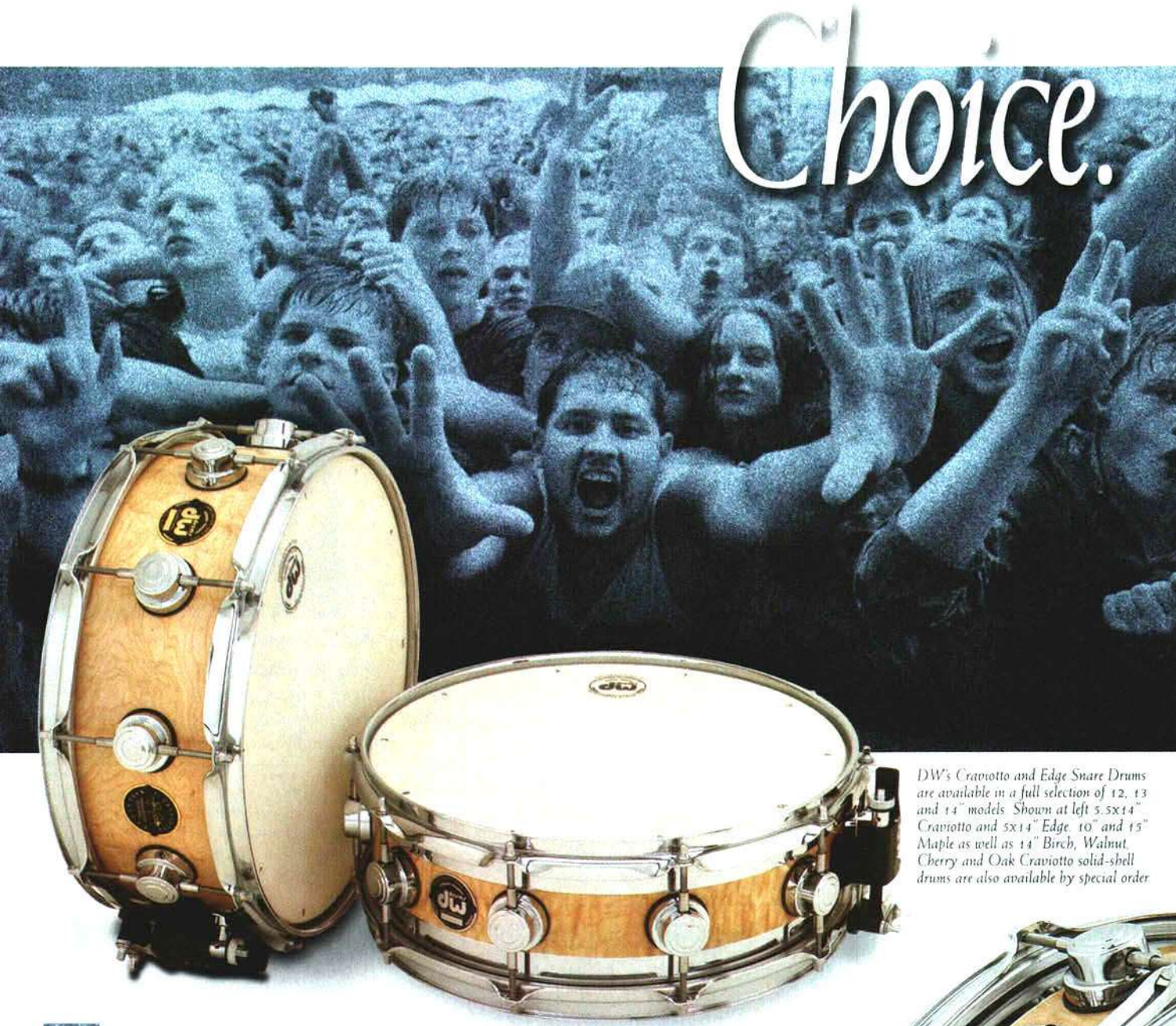
A good way to practice this sort of thing is to program a vamp-like riff in a sequencer using synths, or in a drum machine using percussion grooves. Then solo over the riff. Record yourself and listen back to what you played. Pay attention to how all your notes are fitting in with the sequence, how it feels, and what you are "saying" within your solo content.

As far as tuning goes, that's a fairly loaded question! I find I have to re-tune all the time for different rooms we are playing in, for the different sound systems in those rooms, and for what I want the drums to sound like from a musical standpoint on that given day.

Generally, though, on the Yamaha Maple Vintage kit I play with my band, I use Remo clear Emperors on the tops of the toms and Ambassadors on the bottoms. I tune the bottom heads slightly higher than the tops. That may change if I get too much long-lasting low-end ring. By reversing the tuning ever so slightly I can control that aspect of problematic ringing toms—especially floor toms.

My two signature-model snares—5 ½x14 aluminum and 5x13 maple—are tuned relatively high. The 13", which is to my left, is tuned *very* high, almost timbale-like. I use Remo coated Ambassadors on tops and Ambassador snare-side heads on the bottoms. The bottom head is always tensioned tighter.

DW CRAVIOTTO SOLID MAPLE & EDGE BRASS/MAPLE SNARE DRUMS



DW's Craviotto and Edge Snare Drums are available in a full selection of 12, 13 and 14" models. Shown at left 5.5x14" Craviotto and 5x14" Edge. 10" and 15" Maple as well as 14" Birch, Walnut, Cherry and Oak Craviotto solid-shell drums are also available by special order.

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dw

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On my bass drums—16x22 main and 16x18 auxiliary—I use clear Ambassador batter heads, and an Ambassador-weight front Yamaha logo head. The 22" has a 6" hole at the 4 o'clock position; the 18" has a full front head. I use rolled up towels taped inside the drums on the batter heads (a very *small* towel on the 18"). I also use a small towel on the front head of the 22" and an adjustable external muffler designed by Gary Chaffee on the outside of the front head of the 18". The 22" is tuned low and thuddy for the tight funk stuff. The 18" is tuned higher, but not "bebop high." The difference in the character and pitch of each drum greatly enhances the music we play.

Funkmeister **Herman Matthews'** Favorite Shufflers

Q I truly enjoy your playing; it's some of the most soulful and solid drumming that I've ever heard. I know that you're a serious student of drumming history, especially in the blues and R&B areas. Could you recommend any particular materials to view or artists to listen to on the subject of shuffle playing?

Jodi Nepveu
Concord, NH

A Thanks very much for your kind words. So you want to know my shuffle heroes? *Wow*...there are so many. I don't know of any books or videos specifically about shuffles, although I'm sure that Johnny Vidacovich and Herlin Riley touch on the subject in their excellent New Orleans Drumming videos. But I can suggest some people to listen to.

For great all-around, studio-type shuffle players, listen to Jim Keltner, Steve Jordan, Bernard Purdie, and the late, great Jeff Porcaro. For Texas shuffles (that Stevie Ray Vaughan stuff), I listen to Tony Braunagel, Chris Layton, Willie Ornelas, Doyle Bramhall, Hop Hopkins, and George Reins. For Chicago shuffles I listen to anything from the Chess box set—guys like Freddie Below, Willie Smith, and Sam Lay.

The Stax label guys—Al Jackson and Howard Grimes—are known for their R&B grooves. But they also played shuffles with Albert King on some mean blues records. Then you have the Payne boys, Odie and Sonny (no relation), who played on early B.B. King stuff. There's Willie Hall of the Bar-Kays, and Roger Hawkins from the Muscle Shoals studio. And for the Tulsa shuffle there's Chuck Blackwell.

I know this is a lot, but when I called Tony Braunagel to help me find some of these names, we started to remember *everybody*. Good luck in finding this stuff; it's incredible to listen to.

Submit questions for your favorite drummer to Ask A Pro, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Or you may email rvh@modern-drummer.com. We will do our best to pursue every inquiry. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to reach every artist or that any given artist will respond. Also, due to *MD's* publication schedule, artists' touring schedules, and other considerations, it sometimes takes several months before an inquiry and reply can be published.

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Shown above are a variety of the Remo WeatherKing® Drumheads used by today's top players, including (clockwise from upper left): Ambassador® Coated, FiberSkyn® 3 Thin, Diplomat® Clear, Mondo™ Type 4 Conga, Renaissance® Ambassador and Mondo™ Type 6 Bongo. Shown at left are Remo Drumhead artists (from left to right): Michito Sanchez (LA studio), Karl Perazzo (Santana), Danny Reyes (Yanni), Raul Rekow (Santana), Ron Powell (Kenny G.), Sheila E. (solo artist) and Luis Conté (independent).

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Left Vs. Right

Q Can you name some well-known drummers who play left-hand lead on a right-handed setup? My instructor plays like this, and I'm wondering if it's the best way to teach.

Aaron Harford
via Internet

A Several very successful drummers play left-hand lead on an essentially right-handed kit. (Their one concession to a left-handed setup is to place their ride cymbal on the left side, along with their main hi-hat.) A list of major names includes: Billy Cobham, Simon Phillips, Lenny White, Carter Beauford, and Rayford Griffin.

The possibilities offered by playing this way are extensive in terms of how one can move around the kit. Also, there is the obvious advantage of not having to cross the right hand over the left to play the hi-hat. If it works for the guys listed above, it's sure worth exploring!

Quick Warm-Ups

Q I find it hard to warm up before a gig, as opposed to the gradual warm up I can achieve at rehearsal. Most of my time prior to playing live is spent pre-assembling my kit in preparation for the mad dash to the stage and a frantic five-minute soundcheck. As a result of coming out cold, my arm muscles tend to tense up, and it's a struggle just to hold on to my sticks. When I was younger, I didn't need any warm-up time. But as I have aged, my body needs more time to adjust to rapid movement. Is there anything you can suggest, apart from playing on books or pillows, that could be a gradual warm-up routine given the confined space and time? How about exercises or stretching that I could do prior to playing, using existing equipment such as a hardware bag? (It weighs about 50 lbs.) Any suggestions would be most helpful.

Jeb King
via Internet

A Given "the confined space and time," as you put it, we'd suggest focusing on stretching your arms, wrists, fingers, feet, and legs. There really isn't much time for anything else immediately prior to a show.

Start with a few good ol'-fashioned jumping jacks, which can be done anywhere. This gets the blood flowing throughout your body.

To stretch your legs, calves, and ankles, drop onto your back. Grasp each leg (one at a time) behind the knee. Lift the leg till it's out straight, with your toes pointing straight forward, ballet-style. This will stretch the thigh muscles. Hold for a count of five. Then, point your toes straight up, with your foot at right angles to your leg. This will stretch your calf muscles. Hold for another count of five. Then slowly lower the leg. Do five reps of this for each leg.

A classic method for stretching the arms and wrists is to grasp a pair of drumsticks at their centers, using both hands. Hold the sticks out in front of you, with your palms up and your hands together, side-by-side. Then, without letting go of the sticks, rotate your hands and wrists toward you, turning them over until your arms are out straight again. Do this slowly and carefully! You may not be able to get all the way around at first; work up to the suppleness necessary to complete the turnover.

To isolate and warm up each wrist, hold a pair of sticks at their center in one hand. Hold your arm out straight, and rotate the wrist back and forth quickly (simulating a propeller with the sticks). Maintain this action for several seconds, then relax. Use your other hand to support your elbow and keep it from rotating too. Repeat several times for each hand.

Once your wrist is limber, let go of your elbow and allow the rotation to include your entire arm, up to your shoulder. Allow your arm to move in as loose and relaxed a manner possible. Repeat this several times for each arm.

Stretching and warming up the fingers can be done simply by pressing the fingers of one hand against the palm of the other, then rapidly wiggling the fingers of both hands in the air. It looks a little silly, but it takes no space, and it's as effective as any method we know of for getting the fingers prepared for activity.

We don't recommend using any weights for a pre-show warm-up. The use of weights is generally to build strength, and should be done in a separate physical regimen, independent from your playing. Prior to playing, you should concentrate on getting limber and supple.

Drums And Temperature

Q I live in the Northeast, where the temperature changes all the time. I play and store my drums in the attic. The temperature there can get extremely hot during the day and quite cool at night. I have fans to help circulate the air around the room. My set consists of an all-maple bass drum and toms and a brass snare. Will the temperature ruin my shells, do damage to my hardware, or affect how I tune my drums?

Rich Paulousky
via Internet

A Widely differing temperature shifts within a short period of time do pose a potential hazard to drumshells (and to lacquer finishes). As humidity and temperature change, the moisture content within the cells of the wood is affected. This can make the shells expand or contract, warp, or even crack.

Over the years, the consensus of drum manufacturers has been that drums are safe and comfortable when stored in an environment in which *you* would be safe and comfortable. Shells can take a certain amount of heat and cold, within about the same range that people can. Thus, if you store your drums in an attic, you want to make sure that the attic cannot become superheated to the point where you could not tolerate the temperature and/or stuffiness. Nor would you want it to get so cold that you'd be unable to stand it.

For hot weather, venting the attic is helpful. Cooling it with air conditioning would

be even better. For cold weather, some sort of heater that wouldn't dry the air out too much would be necessary. If these steps are not practical, you may want to consider moving the drums into a more climate-controllable area of the house, if only temporarily.

Your hardware should not be affected by heat or cold, per se. The greatest risk to hardware comes from exposure to moist air (especially salt air), which can promote corrosion. Condensation can sometimes occur when very cold hardware is moved suddenly into a warm environment, but this should not occur when the drums are left set up and the hardware can "adjust" slowly as temperatures change.

Wurlitzer Snare Drum

Q Nearly twenty years ago, I dropped you a line to inquire about the value of a 1900 Wurlitzer snare drum that I owned (and which you featured in your November, 1981 issue, page 20, photo #7. I'm curious to learn what you think it is worth today. I'm considering selling it.

Bill Foster
via Internet

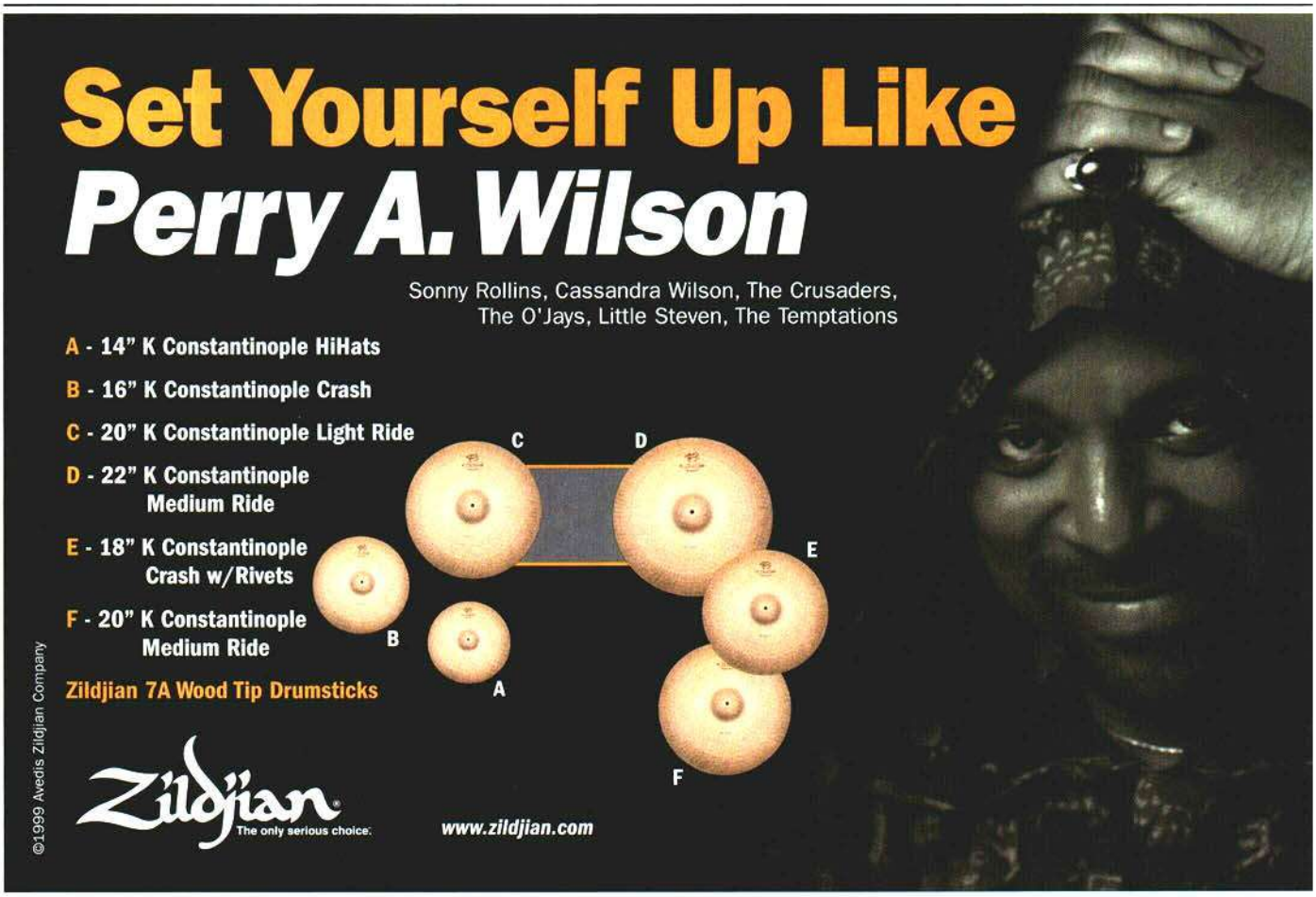
A According to our drum historian, Harry Cangany: "In 1900, Wurlitzer snare drums would have either been rope-tensioned or single-tensioned by rods. My feeling is that these drums—no matter how beautiful, no matter how long they have sat on display—accumulate only small increases in value because they are too impractical to play and cannot be tuned to please. But if you have a museum, love history, enjoy the look, or get sentimental about a family heirloom, then that may be a different matter in terms of the drum's value to *you.* In the vintage market, we see snare drums from the late 19th and early 20th century top out at about $200."

Zildjian Mystery

Q I have a question about my A Zildjians. I bought a pair of 19" medium crash cymbals in 1974. At least I *thought* they were a pair; when I ordered them there was to be no difference. I finally gave in to cleaning them (twenty-five years later) and discovered that they are *not* the same. One is a normal A Zildjian, but the other has a different hammering effect on it. The hammering looks exactly like that on my A Custom Ping Ride. What gives? Upon further cleaning I discovered that I also have a 16" crash, purchased in 1979, that has the same hammering design. To top it all off I have two sets of 14" New Beat hi-hats that I thought were the same. But now I find out that one is hammered and one is not. I don't recall any advertising of different models back in the '70s, so why did I end up with these different styles of cymbals?

Bill Shine
via Internet

A Zildjian's director of education, John King, replies, "Your question concerning variations in appearance of Zildjian cymbals is a query that I respond to quite frequently. The fact of the matter is that very few changes in the Zildjian cymbal making process have taken place over the last 376 years. New technology has indeed been implemented, but only with new cymbal introductions that offer more "variations on a theme" against the standard models that Zildjian produces. We have replaced the hand shaping technique (which is very inconsistent) with the ability to press in a perfect central shape with a



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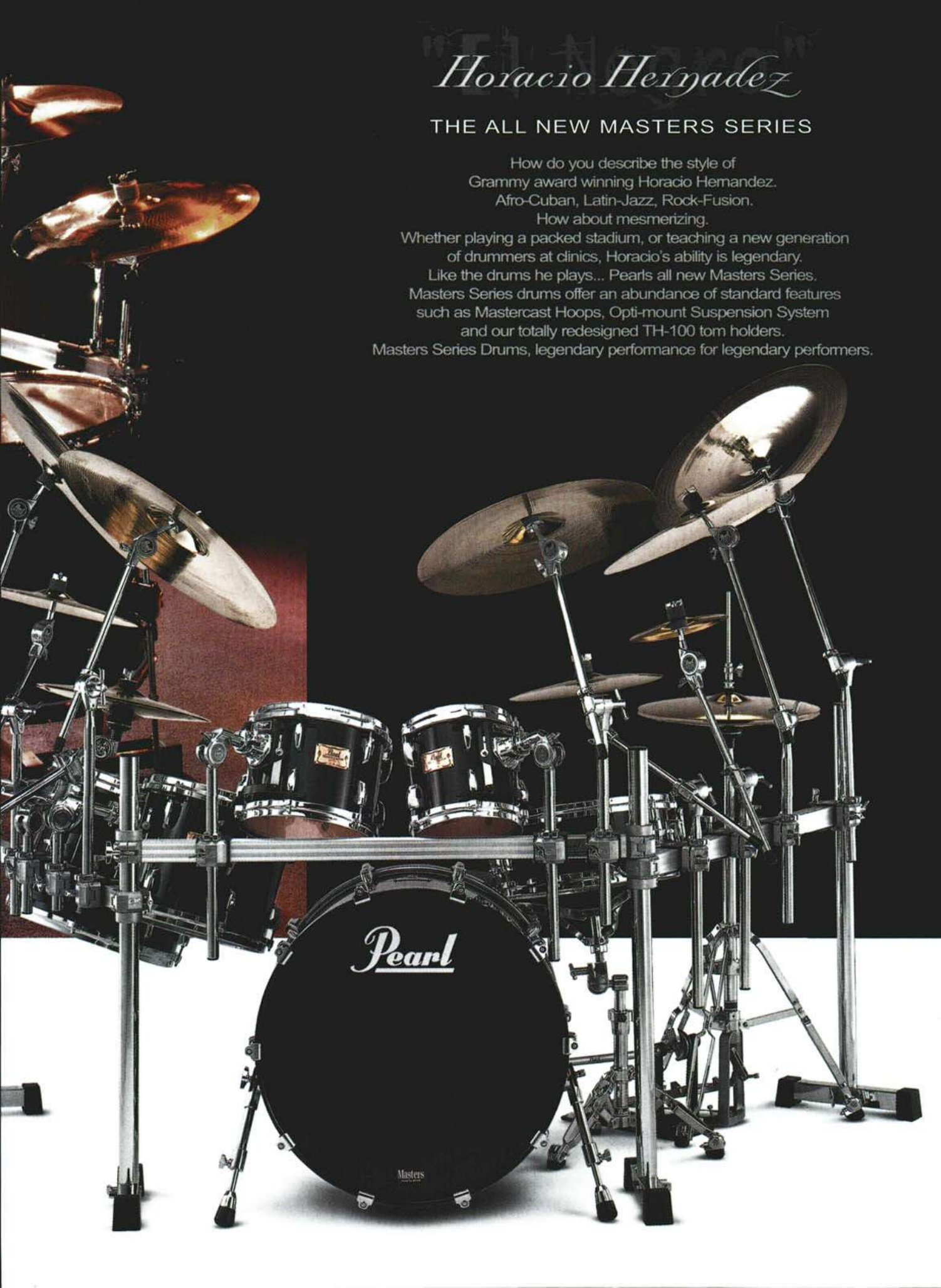
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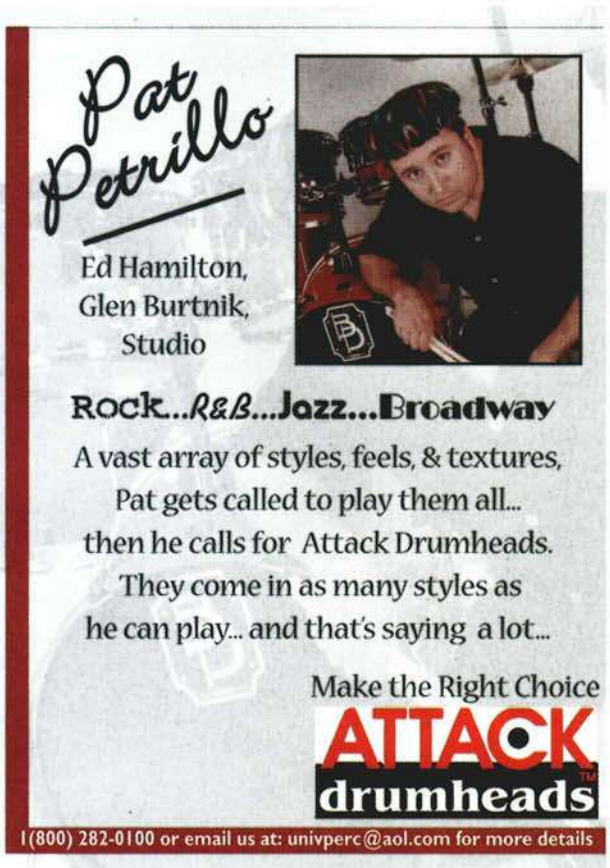
All of these variables are factored into our specification sheets. This assures that each cymbal model arrives within the sonic parameters that we have set for it. After those specifications have been verified to accomplish what we want, the process does not change from that point on. There are times when hammering impressions might be more or less visible between examples of the same model, because of conditions I have described above. But despite such cosmetic differences, "the song always remains the same."

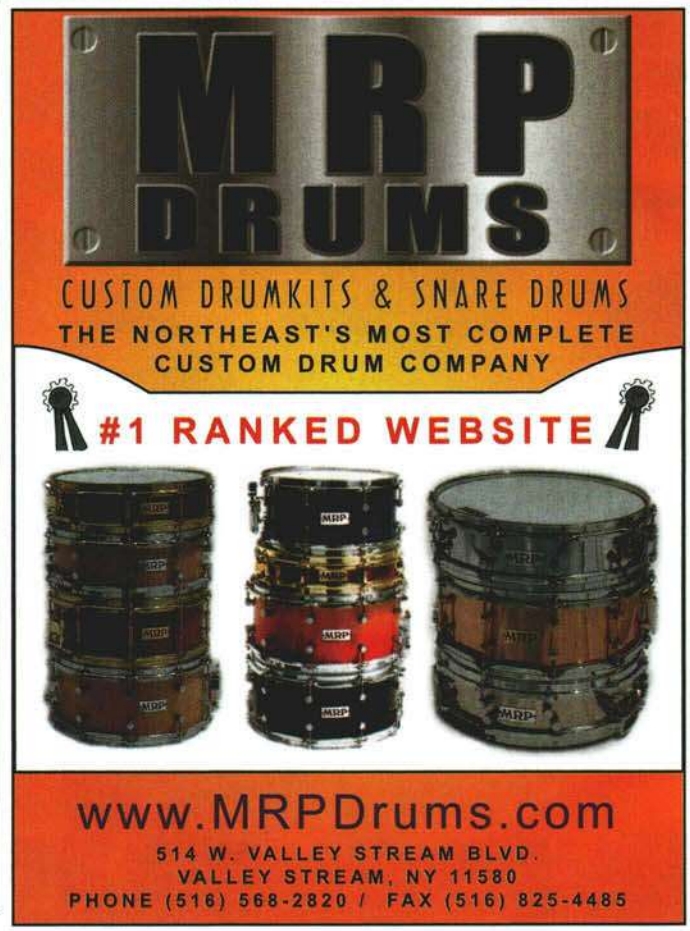
Sticks Get High

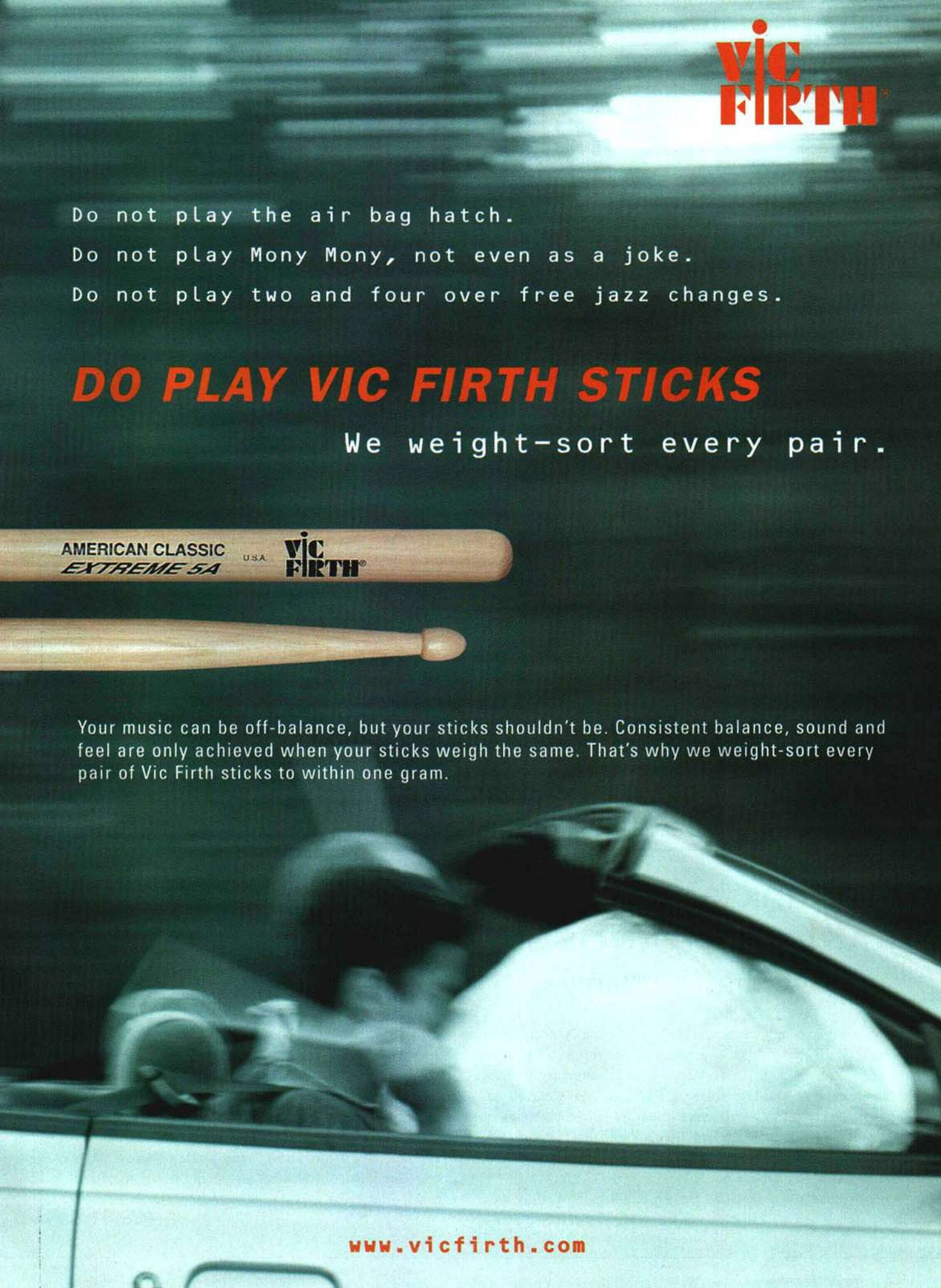
Q How does altitude affect drum sticks? I live in southwest Colorado, perform all over the southwest US, and drive up and down a lot of elevation. Some nights I perform at 10,000 ft and the next night I might be at 5,000 ft. Can this contribute to warping drum sticks?

Ryan Sapp
Durango, CO

A Drumsticks warp because of changes in temperature and/or humidity, which affect the moisture content within the cells of the wood. These changes generally happen over a period of time, such as while the sticks are in storage, or perhaps on the dealer's shelves. They can also happen when the sticks move from a very moist area into a very dry one. Elevation alone (and the resulting change in air pressure) should not adversely affect drumsticks—and certainly not within the time period of one gig.



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Trilok Gurtu

Indian Influence

His style is often described as a blend of Indian music and jazz, but Trilok Gurtu denies that he's a jazz musician. "I like jazz, but I'm an Indian musician, just as John Coltrane liked Indian music but was a jazz musician," Gurtu says. "I've played with people like Pharoah Sanders and Don Cherry, but I'm not into playing standards.

"People call me a jazz musician because there's a lot of improvisation in my music. But Indian music is eighty percent improvised. Jazz is only about a hundred years old, while Indian music is *thousands* of years old. So you can take it further, because it is well figured out. What I do with my knowledge is put things together to create a contemporary sound."

"Jazz is only about a hundred years old, while Indian music is *thousands* of years old. So you can take it further, because it is well figured out."

That approach is obvious on Gurtu's recent album, *Kathak.* In addition to traditional Indian instruments such as tabla and sitar, Gurtu's band includes guitar, electric bass, and a wide array of percussion. The album also features guest rock guitarist Steve Lukather and vocalist Neneh Cherry, as well as Trilok's mother, Shobha Gurtu, a respected Indian classical singer. It's world music, without question. But more than that, it's Trilok Gurtu's music.

"I've made my own scene," he agrees. "Once you develop a sound and find what you want to express, you can't categorize it. The drum 'n' bass people in England come to see me, Asian people come to see me, and I'm getting a lot of respect from Indian classical musicians, too.

"If you just try to imitate what the fashion is," Trilok warns, "you won't last long. But once you have your own sound, you can always do something new with it."

Reflecting his music's growth, Gurtu's setup has evolved as well. He has recently added timpani, clay drums made by Frank Giorgini, and various electronic effects. He has also collaborated with Remo on the design of some drums, and Zildjian has introduced Trilok Gurtu signature drumsticks.

In the coming year, Gurtu plans to release an album on which he will collaborate with African musicians, and he hopes to spend more time touring in the US. "Everything is falling in place with my group," he says. "So I don't have to do other projects unless they're really happening musically."

Rick Mattingly

Skunk Anansie's MARK RICHARDSON

Covering The Range

"I have *never* been that focused before." Skunk Anansie drummer Mark Richardson is recalling earlier this year when his band played at the 30th Anniversary of the Glastonbury Festival, one of the biggest music festivals in England. "We were *all* nervous, but we knew this would have to be one of the best gigs we would ever play. Some players can just click into that concentration, but it's hard for me. But I watched the footage and I'm very proud of that gig—I peaked when I needed to."

When Richardson joined the British band in 1994, they were already signed to One Little Indian Records, who released *Stoosh* in 1996. After seemingly endless touring and growing popularity in England and abroad, Skunk Anansie was signed by Virgin Records, who recently released *Post Orgasmic Chill.*

Richardson says that Skunk Anansie provides him with a challenging musical situation. "There are a lot of players out there who are one-trick ponies," he says. "You can't afford to do that in this band, because there is *so* much variation among the tunes."

Post Orgasmic Chill confirms Richardson's range. The punk-influenced "Skank Heads" features a jagged tom/snare groove in the verses, which is something Mark says he had never done before. "That works well," he explains, "and we'll develop it even more for our next album." In contrast, "Secretly" is a subtle track that called for a different set of chops. "That's in the flavor of '50 Ways To Leave Your Lover,'" says Mark. "There are a lot of ghost notes. This band can go from extremely heavy to extremely delicate and vulnerable."

Harriet L. Schwartz

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Pat Petrillo

Smooth, Groovin'—And Proud Of It

At a recent smooth jazz festival in Philadelphia, drummer Pat Petrillo was performing with guitarist Ed Hamilton when an elderly, "old school-looking" gentleman shuffled up to the bandstand and started screaming, "This ain't no @#!%# jazz! Where's the Coltrane and Miles? Play some *real* jazz!" Petrillo and bandmates looked around at the other nine hundred ninety-nine people who were really digging the music and realized that, although the man may have had a valid point, the majority of the crowd was there to hear the modern sounds of today's smooth jazz.

"There's a real cult-like following of smooth jazz, which I think is great," says Petrillo. "We're playing venues like The Blue Note, small theaters, radio festivals, and the *BET On Jazz* TV show. Our live show combines the smooth sound of today along with an early fusion vibe. And while it's not *straight-ahead* jazz, it sure beats playing the small, *straight-ahead* clubs in New York for twenty-five bucks."

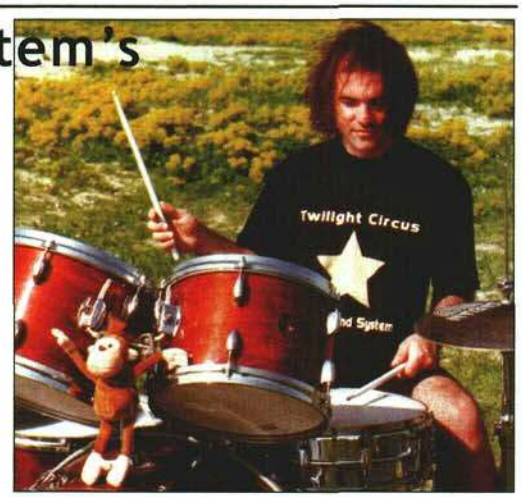
Petrillo, owner and drum instructor of the Groove Academy of Music in Edison, New Jersey, has a new instructional video in the works. "The video," Pat explains, "will consist of a series of short hand exercises based on simple rudiments that I've developed to build chops. It will also feature drumset workouts and live playing demonstrations."

On the new Ed Hamilton record, *Hear In The Now* (Fahrenheit), Petrillo performs a nice blend of R&B and jazz, which is radio-friendly yet musician-friendly. Petrillo also works with pop artist Glen Burtnik *(Palookaville)* and has performed with Patti La Belle and played with the national tour of the Broadway show *Dreamgirls.*

Currently Petrillo is working on his debut CD, *Hittin',* which will feature bassists Will Lee, Stanley Clarke, Charles Fambrough, and the late saxophonist George Howard. "Raising a family is also a priority in my life, Pat adds. "But I'm having a lot of fun making music and making a living doing what I love."

Mike Haid

Twilight Circus Dub Sound System's Ryan Moore



"I feel like I'm *exploding* with ideas. If I had a clone, I think I could churn out a good record every couple of months." Those familiar with the work of Ryan Moore's one-man band Twilight Circus Dub Sound System won't doubt his words. A white Canadian expat living in Holland, Moore is a rarity in his chosen field of dub reggae. The classic dub cuts were recorded in the early '70s by Jamaican innovators like King Tubby and Lee "Scratch" Perry, who added copious effects to the grooves of studio "house" bands like The Aggrovators and Upsetters. A self-taught expert in dub history and techniques—and a drummer with a *way* deep feel—Moore does it all himself, from the playing to the mixing. He even releases the results on his own M Records.

"I was attracted to dub early on," Moore explains, "because it features my two favorite instruments, drums and bass. When I record, I improvise at almost every stage. I start by putting down a drum track. Then I improvise a bass line. The song is riding on the bass and drums, so I strive for something that's inspiring. Where it all comes together, though, is in the final mix. That's where the *magic* happens. I go crazy, twisting every knob in sight."

Moore says he largely steers clear of the digital realm with Twilight Circus. "I find it too slow," he explains. "And I prefer to hear rough edges. A lot of modern music is too polished. Sometimes I record in a really lo-fi way, with just one microphone."

Live, Moore plays kit along to prerecorded tapes and employs a sound mixer who provides dub effects. Ryan says he goes "pretty mental" during shows. "I create bizarre segues and perform all manner of crazy antics—chasing people around with various relaxation implements and the like. There's so much room for experimentation. *Anything* can work."

Moore also plays with psychedelic cult heroes The Legendary Pink Dots and the more computer-oriented Tear Garden, which features cEVIN Key from industrialists Skinny Puppy. They've recently begun work on a new album, and Moore is also just about finished with the follow-up to Twilight Circus's *Horsie* collection, which he says will incorporate some drum 'n' bass elements. In addition, Ryan has just released the new vinyl collection *Dub Plates Vol. 2,* which consists of exclusive tracks and remixes of previous cuts. To check out this and other "hardcore dub feasts" from Twilight Circus, surf to www.bsg-inc.com/twilight/.

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Doane Perry

Leading Tull Into The Computer Age

Veteran drummer Doane Perry celebrates his sixteenth season with classic rock group Jethro Tull with the new release *J-Tull Dot Com.* (The clever Tull lads have also chosen that for their Web site URL.) The group is currently in the midst of a world tour.

During a tour break, Perry was called upon to do a short stint with ambient world music artist Kitaro. "I really enjoy the different challenges of Tull and Kitaro," says Perry. "Kitaro's music is very orchestral and drum-oriented. At one point during the show he plays the big Taiko drums and we do an improvised drum and Taiko section, which is very dynamic and exciting."

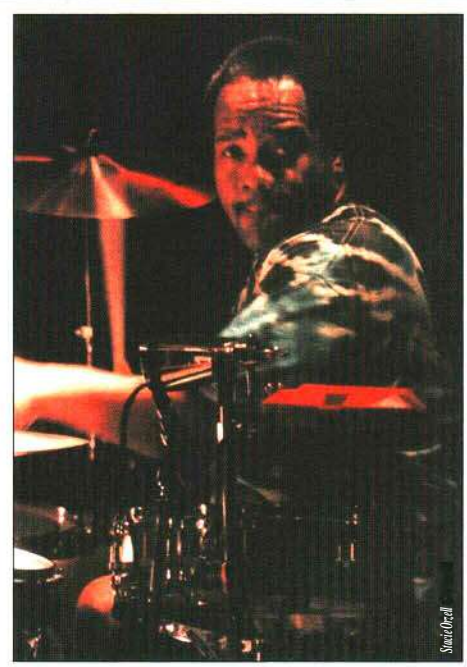
With a catalog of over three hundred songs, the Jethro Tull tour is ever-changing for Perry. "We're playing seven songs from the new album on a rotating basis," Perry explains. "And we always have to play a represented cross-section of music from every era of the band. There are only two or three songs that *have* to be played from tour to tour. We try and rearrange the material to keep it interesting for the audience—and for ourselves. For instance, this is the first tour that we are not playing 'Aqualung' in its entirety. Rather, we're doing it as a part of a medley along with some other classic Tull pieces."

Having followed in the footsteps of several outstanding drummers from Tull's past lineups, Perry explains that the most challenging aspect of performing with the band is to make the music feel good. "There are a lot of time signature changes, tempo changes, and feel changes within the material," he explains. "To anchor the music in a way that's natural for me is the key. I must observe the parts that were created by the drummers who came before me and play them in a convincing way so that the feel and integrity remains intact. But I also have to play what feels good to me and what will also propel the band. I'm always thinking about the time, groove, and feel of each section. Basically my job is to make Jethro Tull groove."

Mike Haid

Yonrico Scott

Drivin' The Derek Trucks Band



Yonrico Scott likens his drumkit to a "sanctuary" of sorts, a special place where this Motown-born talent is free to soar with spirit, and to venture in search of musical salvation.

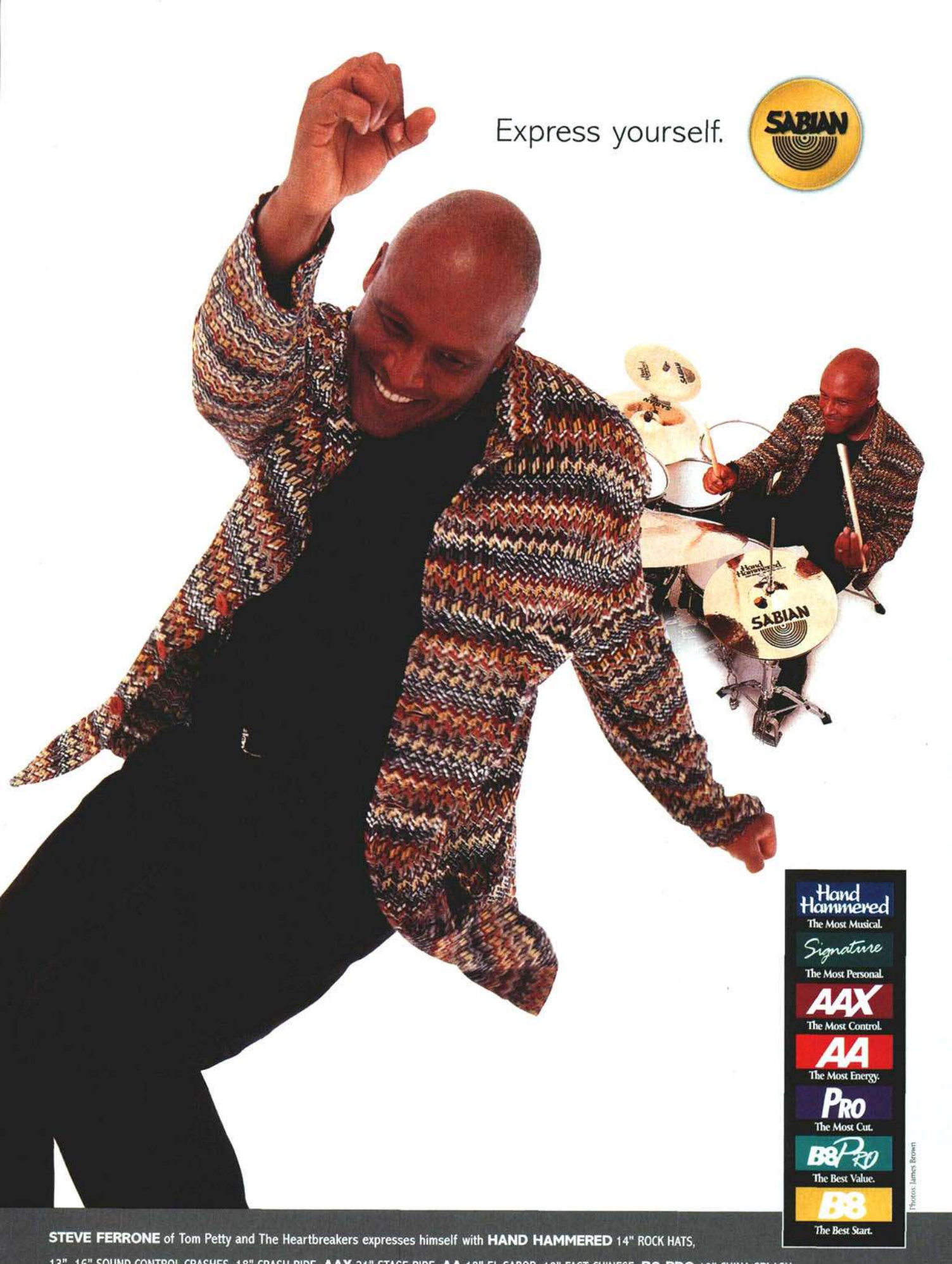
Scott, five-year veteran drummer for The Derek Trucks Band, has a background rich in versatility. He performed in the gospel church as a youth, graduated from the University of Kentucky music program, played Broadway, and shared stages with Stevie Wonder and Freddie Hubbard. One thing has remained consistent throughout: Scott's passion for his craft. "I love what I do," he urges, "and I think my enthusiasm comes across to the listener."

That enthusiasm certainly isn't lost on Derek Trucks, who says, "Rico's energy level is unbelievable. He's such a powerful presence musically. But he also has a great ability to listen."

Scott has a keen appreciation for the history of drumming. "Max Roach, Tony Williams, Art Blakey, Elvin Jones—those are the guys I admire. That's where it all came from." In fact, Scott may get an opportunity to work with special guest Elvin Jones on The Derek Trucks Band's upcoming third release, due out shortly. The band, whose style Scott describes as "old-school blues-based," has been recording at Dockside Studios in rural Louisiana, following the recent lead of the legendary B.B. King.

While Trucks recently toured with The Allman Brothers, Scott took the opportunity to tour with his own project, The Yonrico Scott Band. Scott says he savored the experience. "It was truly enjoyable," he says. "We played everything from funky originals to old bebop tunes. I always like to keep it fresh and challenging for the audience." All in a day's work for Scott. "When I leave a gig, I'm happy—like I've been to church."

John Dauphin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news

John Riley is on the new Vanguard Jazz Orchestra CD, *The Thad Jones Legacy.* John recently toured Portugal and Egypt with the VJO, and he just returned from a west coast tour with The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band.

Tommy Igoe recently recorded some tracks for the upcoming Lauryn Hill record.

Glen Sobel is on new CDs from Gary Hoey and Ken Tamplin, and on his own *Impellitteri* CD due out soon. Glen also continues to teach at LAMA.

Todd Nance and **Domingo S. Ortiz** are on Widespread Panic's *'Til The Medicine Takes.*

Milo Todesco is on Down By Law's *Fly The Flag.*

Prairie Prince is on Neal Schon's *Piranha Blues.*

Denny Fongheiser is on recent releases by Julia Darling, Christian Gibbs, Peter Stuart, and John Paul Jones, and on Meredith Brooks' soundtrack music for *Snake Eyes.* He's also been doing sessions with Tracy Chapman, Pat Benatar, Wonderland, Kevin Montgomery, Kalli, and Sister Hazel, and for Las Vegas's MGM show, *EFX.* Check out his Web site at www.dennyfongheiser.com.

Ricochet's **Jeff Bryant** has been forced to leave the group due to carpal tunnel syndrome. He's been replaced by **Tim Chewning.**

Bernard Purdie is working on an instructional video in Japan.

Joey Waronker, who has been working for both Beck and R.E.M., has decided to focus on R.E.M. He *is* on Beck's new album, *Midnite Vultures,* and is currently producing British pop artist Marie Therese.

Drummers **Larry Beers** and **Hank Guaglianone** are on Sonia Dada's *Lay Down And Love It Live.*

Since leaving The Backstreet Boys, Tim **Berkebile** has taped a Disney video with groups Another Level and LFO.

Ginger Fish is on Marilyn Manson's recently released live offering, *The Last Tour On Earth.*

Mike Levesque and **Sterling Campbell** can be heard on David Bowie's newest album, *hours....*

Gary Ferguson and **Matt Sorum** are on Glenn Hughes' *The Way It Is.*

Joe Culver and Ed Farnsworth are on Bardo Pond's *Set And Setting.*

Tyler Land, a.k.a. **Lord Lust 3rd,** is on tour with glam-rock band Young & Fabulous.

Jerry Terwillger is on tour with Pound promoting their debut CD, *Same Old Life.*

Mickey Curry is on a European tour with Bryan Adams.

Richie Hayward is on the new Bob Seger album.

Jason Sutter can be heard on tracks on Juliana Hatfield's upcoming release and is currently on tour with Ben Lee.

John Miceli is on Meat Loaf's *Storytellers.*

Carter Beauford is on John Popper's *Zygote.*

Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez and Willie Martinez can be heard on Chico O'Farill's *Heart OfA Legend.*

Dan Didier is on The Promise Ring's new one, *Very Emergency!*

John Reynolds drummed on and produced The Indigo Girls' new *Come On Now Social.* **Jerry Marotta, Brady Blade, and Kate Schellenbach** are on one cut each.

Mitch Marine is on tour with Smash Mouth.

Our apologies to the former Cindy Juarez, who was incorrectly identified as "Sadie" Juarez in December's news item congratulating her and husband **Stephen Perkins** on their September marriage.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history.

Chick Webb is born on February 10, 1909.

In February *of* 1956, **Jerry Allison** and Buddy Holly head for Nashville from Lubbock, Texas. Unfortunately, three years later, on February 3, 1959, the music dies when Holly is killed in a plane crash.

Baby Dodds dies on February 14, 1959 in Chicago.

The United States is introduced to Richard Starkey, a.k.a. **Ringo Starr,** on February 9, 1964. The Beatles and Ed Sullivan set a record by causing seventy-three million people to sit in front of their television sets.

Hal Blaine records "The Beat Goes On" with Sonny & Cher, February 1967.

In February of 1970 Leon Russell assembles an all-star, forty-three-member touring entourage for Joe Cocker called "Mad Dogs & Englishmen," featuring **Jim Gordon and Jim Keltner** on drums.

Paul Simon's "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover," with Steve **Gadd** on drums, is number-one on the charts on February 7, 1976.

Toto has their first and only number-one with "Africa," co-written by drummer **Jeff Porcaro,** on February 5, 1983.

A few years after changing electronic drums forever with their SDS 5, in February of 1984 **Simmons** releases the SDS 7, their most prestigious and most expensive kit.

Alex Van Halen and company hit number-one with "Jump," February 25, 1984.

Tony Williams dies on February 23, 1997.

Birthdates

Hal Blaine (February 5, 1929)
Harvey Mason (February 22, 1947)
Manny Elias (February 21, 1953)
Ron Welty (February 1, 1971)

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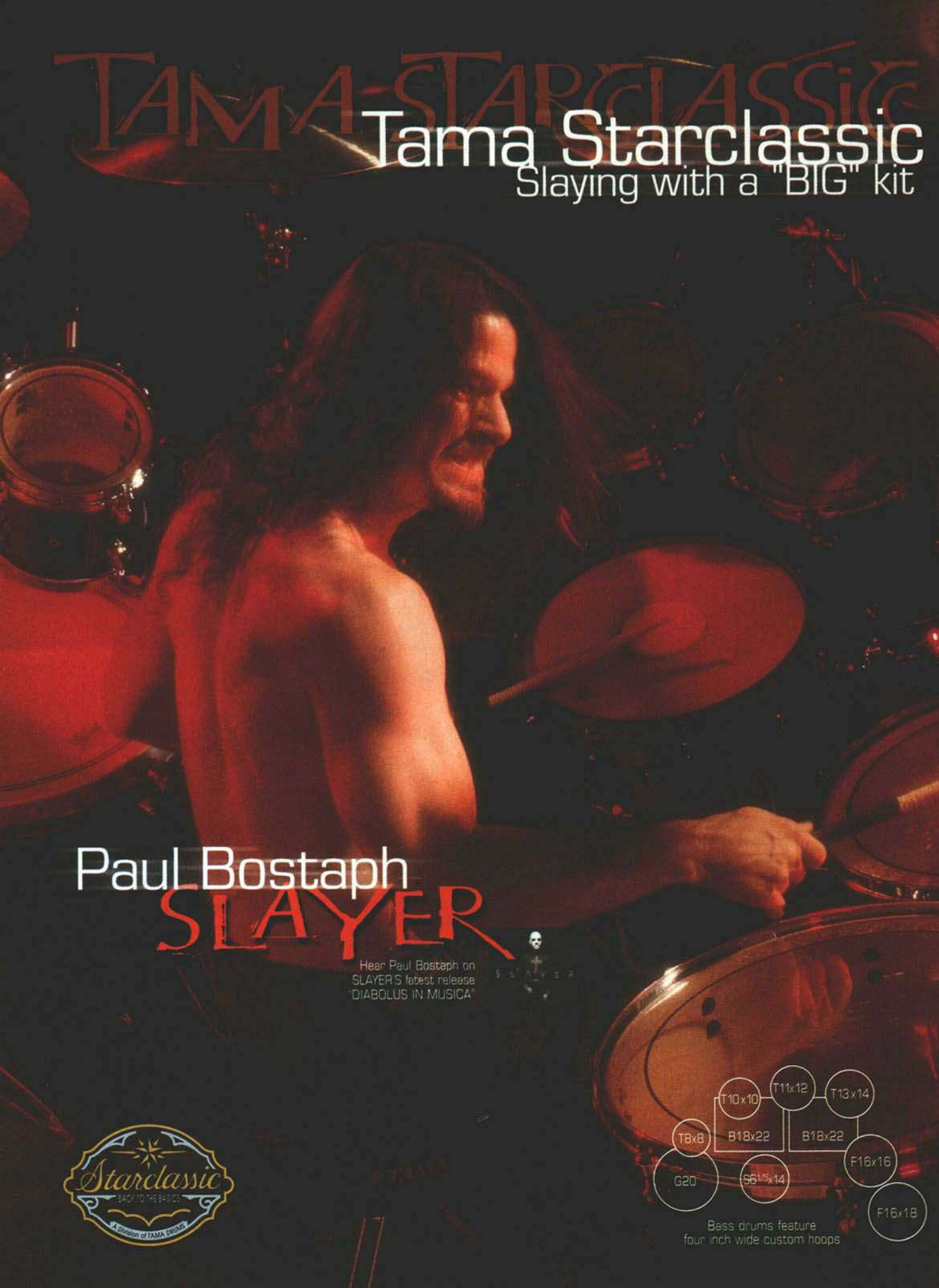
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Tama Starclassic
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F16x18
Bass drums feature
four inch wide custom hoops
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"The funny thing is that when people look at my drum set they think it's big," remarks master speed metallist, Paul Bostaph, Slayer's demon of the double bass. "Well it's not big when you compare it to kits in the '80s, when some guys had drums just for the sake of having them. But I use everything on my kit. And I get a wider selection of voices and tones than I would out of small kit. Naturally, I need the bigger drums for the really heavy parts. But unlike a lot of metal players, I actually do most of my playing on the smaller toms.

"I also like the contrasts you get in a bigger kit. One of the best contrasts came about when I moved the 8" tom over the Gong bass drum to make it easier to play my 15" hi hats. That got me into working with ideas featuring the contrasts of those two different drums to use in future recordings.

"I do use a smaller kit when jamming and for about two years I actually used a single bass with a double pedal. I found that one bass drum doesn't have a compelling feel for me. With two bass drums, there's so much more definition and sound.

"In the studio I use a 6 1/2 x 14" bell brass snare on the slow material and the bell brass piccolo on the fast stuff. Live I only use the piccolo. I'd love to use the 6 1/2" in concert, too, but in Slayer we play songs from 15 years worth of albums back to back to back. There's no time to switch drums and mikes. Fortunately, the bell brass piccolo not only cuts; it's also got a lot of warmth.

Gong Bass Drum placed on left side with 8 x 8" tom for easier hi-hat cymbal access.

"The challenge in what I do is to get tones that are both warm and fast. Even with a large kit, each drum has to be able to cut through and still sound big. It's hard to get all of that out of one drum. But I'm able to get everything I need in both tone and speed out of my Starclassics. And that's the truth."

PL565 6 1/2 x 14" 3mm bell brass snare with bell brass hoops.

MHA623 hi-hat attachment for double bass set-ups.

MC61 "FastClamp" multi-clamp attached to hi-hat stand for microphone placement.

HH805 Iron Cobra Velo Glide traditional pull hi-hat.

HH900P Iron Cobra bass pedal (one of two) with Power Glide offset cam.

MXA63 closed hi hat holder. "During double bass playing, I can still get that old school hi-hat choke sound. It sounds like there are two hi-hats playing...and there are!"

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MACHINE HEAD'S

Dave McClain

LOSING THE DRUMMER'S EGO

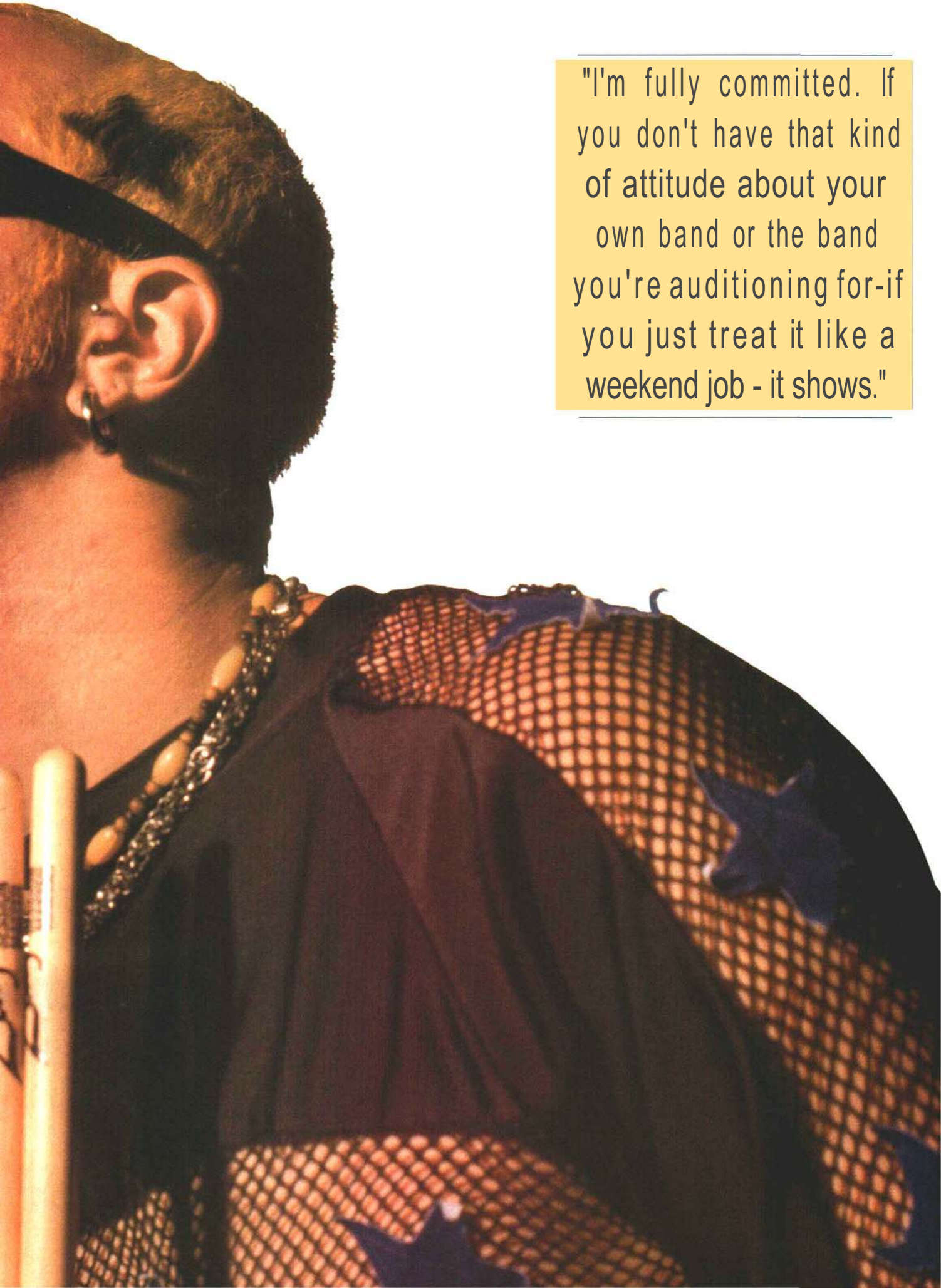
story by | Matt Peiken
photos by | Alex Solca

Dave McClain had long ago heard the credo "less is more." He never considered adopting it into his own style until looking into a mirror—listening back to board tapes of Machine Head's live shows.

"All I could hear was *brrap brrap buurrapp burrapp brrap*—like, 'What the hell am I playing?'" McClain says. "When you're playing in arenas with these huge sound systems and 10,000 people, nobody's going to notice or care if you put those little flams or intricate rolls in there. They'd rather just hear a solid, steady beat."

McClain wanted to employ the lesson of that revelation to Machine Head's new disc, *The Burning Red.* He didn't exactly mimic AC/DC pounder Phil Rudd, but he aimed to shed what he calls the "drummer's ego." He gave the double-kick a rest and cut back on the barrage of single-stroke rolls that punctuated his performance on Machine Head's previous effort, *The More Things Change,* and the records he made before that with Forbidden. In exchange, McClain delivered a combination of tight, meaty, and aggressive rhythms unsurpassed during the past year of metal drumming.

McClain's approach allowed Machine Head to build a bridge from its hardcore roots to a more versatile, song-oriented record. *The Burning Red* surprised some purists—and not always pleasantly—with the diversification. After all, not every metal band dares covering "Message In A Bottle" by The Police. But risks such as those, McClain says, are necessary for any artistic growth.



"I'm fully committed. If you don't have that kind of attitude about your own band or the band you're auditioning for-if you just treat it like a weekend job - it shows."

As Machine Head began touring in support of the new record, McClain talked about the importance of breaking out of the hardcore mold, turning his drumming inside out, and the mental toughness that went into the making of *The Burning Red.*

MD: Some hardcore purists look at the new record as somewhat of a "sellout." Did you guys consciously try to write songs that had more basic drive and melody?

Dave: Before we started writing anything, right after we got off the road, we had a band meeting and talked about what we wanted out of the next record. We talked about this being our third record and how the third record has been important for a lot of bands—Metallica, Black Sabbath, *all* the bands we've always looked up to. That third record always seems to be a defining record, where their sound has really come together. We also wanted to make it really different from what we'd done before, so we tried to be open to anything, like putting piano in a song, which we did—things that we were afraid to do before.

The thing we heard from people about our second record was that they liked it, but that it was kinda just a continuation of the first record. And no matter how much we wanted to believe otherwise, in hindsight, it wasn't as much of a progression as we would have liked. So we wanted to really make a big leap this time. You can hear hip-hop influences in our songs, and Robb [Flynn] is really singing now.

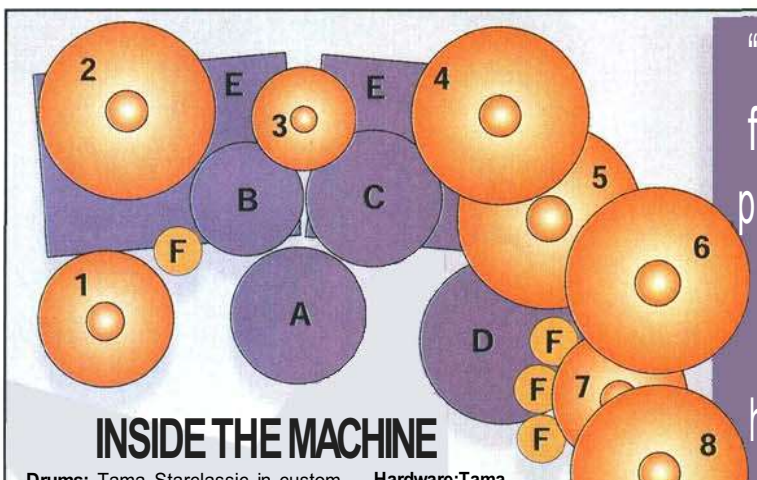
I told Robb, too, that with my playing, I was just sick of the drummer's ego and wanted to just throw it out. In the past, I'd always worried about the one percent of the people who buy our records being drummers and "What are they gonna think?" I don't care about that at all anymore. I'm playing simpler. I'm not doing a lot of flammy things anymore. If I'm gonna play double bass, it's gonna be a beat, not just a roll. What that did, in the end, was make my playing heavier.

MD: Your new approach doesn't seem to involve laying back or just bashing it out. There are several complex rhythms on the album. You accented and created movement really well. And the notes you play ended up meaning more. Along with the stylistic shift, did the process of creating your drum parts change?

Dave: I became the total anti-drummer. That was also coming after reading about the stupid Ginger Fish and Tommy Lee controversies in *Modern Drummer,* with people getting all mad and writing in and saying they're canceling their subscriptions. Ginger Fish is an incredible drummer, and so is Tommy Lee. It was like a religious thing with these people, so I just thought to myself, "Screw them." That's what made me think about completely ditching the drummer's ego.

I didn't practice or work out my parts at all for this record. But as a band, we rehearsed and prepared really well. We'd demo the songs and change things up, and I'd take more and more things out of my drumming. There's a song called "Exhale The Vile," which starts with a tribal-type drum rhythm. When I first started with that song, there was just a cluster of drum stuff. I had some double bass in there and I had a lot more accents. Eventually I just put the kick drum on the beat and stripped a lot of the extra notes away, and it made it a lot more powerful. There were other songs where we'd record and listen back and think, for example, that the chorus was too busy. So we'd do the chorus again and fly it into the track.

On "Nothing Left" there's a tambourine in the chorus. I didn't record it at the time I did my drum part, but I kept hearing this sound in my head. We were playing back the song and there was a tambourine in the room, and I just started hitting it on the



INSIDE THE MACHINE

Drums: Tama Starclassic in custom chrome finish
A. 3x14 piccolo snare (metal)
B. 10x12 tom
C. 12x14 tom
D. 16x18 floor tom
E. 18x22 bass drum
F. Roland pad

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" A Rock hi-hats
2. 19" A Rock crash
3. 10" A splash
4. 19" A Rock crash
5. 20" A Mega Bell ride
6. 20" A medium crash
7. 14" A Rock hi-hats (on X-Hat)
8. 19" K Custom Dark China

Hardware:Tama, including a rack and Iron Cobra bass drum pedals (tensioned very loose) with "big wooden beaters"

Heads: Aquarian High Energy on snare batter, Response II on toms (tuned "finger tight") and bass drums (with Danmar Pad at beater impact point)

Sticks: Zildjian Session Master model (hickory) with wood tip

Electronics: ddrum-AT, Akai S2000 sampler, Roland pads

Microphones: Shure SM91 (kicks), SM98 (toms), and SM57 (snare)

"I took some lessons from a guy who was pretty tough on me. He once turned to a page that looked hard, and I said, 'I can't play that,' and he grabbed a drumstick and smacked my hand, saying, 'Don't ever say you can't do anything.'"

upbeat, and Robb was like, "That's killer." We just overdubbed the part into it, but I had to figure out how to do that live because I'm doing some other things on the toms there.

MD: Some hardcore purists have criticized Machine Head for "softening up" a bit on the new record. Did you make a conscious decision, in effect, to write more accessible music?

Dave: From the moment people heard we were gonna use Ross Robinson as our producer—before anyone heard *any* music—they were saying we were gonna sound like KoRn or Limp Bizkit, and that just pisses me off. We want to please the fans who loved *Burn My Eyes* and *The More Things Change,* but we're not going to put out the same record again. We have to change, because we want to.

One of the first things we told Ross is that we're not one of these baby bands that grew up listening to KoRn. We totally like and respect that band, but we've been around a while and we didn't want to sound anything *like* KoRn. We have our own sound, and we're still the same musicians. Of course, I want people to love the record and I hope we gain a lot more fans. More so now, I think we're starting to develop our style, and I think this is the first Machine record that shows how versatile we can be and that we're capable of growing. This is the first record I've made where I listen back to it and feel happy with everything I played.

MD: Covering The Police's "Message In A Bottle" was a risk.

Dave: We didn't even know the song really well when we went to do it, and Ross kinda had to key us up to even record it. I didn't even think about trying to play it like Stewart Copeland because he's absolutely amazing and we have very different styles. I just played his basic beat, only heavier. We originally thought it was gonna be a B-side for Europe, but we lis-

Dave McClain

Burning Beats

These are the albums that Dave says best represent his playing:

Artist	Album
Machine Head	The Burning Red
Machine Head	The More Things Change
Sacred Reich	Heal
Sacred Reich	Independent

...and these are the ones he listens to for inspiration:

Artist	Album	Drummer
Missing Persons	Spring Session M	Terry Bozzio
Pantera	Vulgar Display Of Power	Vinnie Paul
Foo Fighters	The Colour And The Shape	Dave Grohl
Metallica	Master Of Puppets	Lars Ulrich
Sepultura	Roots	Igor Cavalera

tened back and it came out so killer, so we knew we had to find a place for it on the record.

MD: Were you meticulous or particular about what you wanted from your drum sounds? Your attack is really fierce.

Dave: Actually, this was the first time I've ever done a record where the drums sounded on tape exactly as they sound to me behind the kit when I'm playing. It was really surprising, because you're usually tweaking this or that for ages. The way I tune my drums is I get the lugs finger-tight and then go maybe a quarter-turn with the key, and that's it. My 12" rack tom sounds like a kick drum. And I didn't want to mess around with different heads and things like that. It worked out so perfectly, it made me wonder why sessions don't always go like that.

MD: You mentioned "getting rid of the drummer's ego," yet your kit is much bigger now.

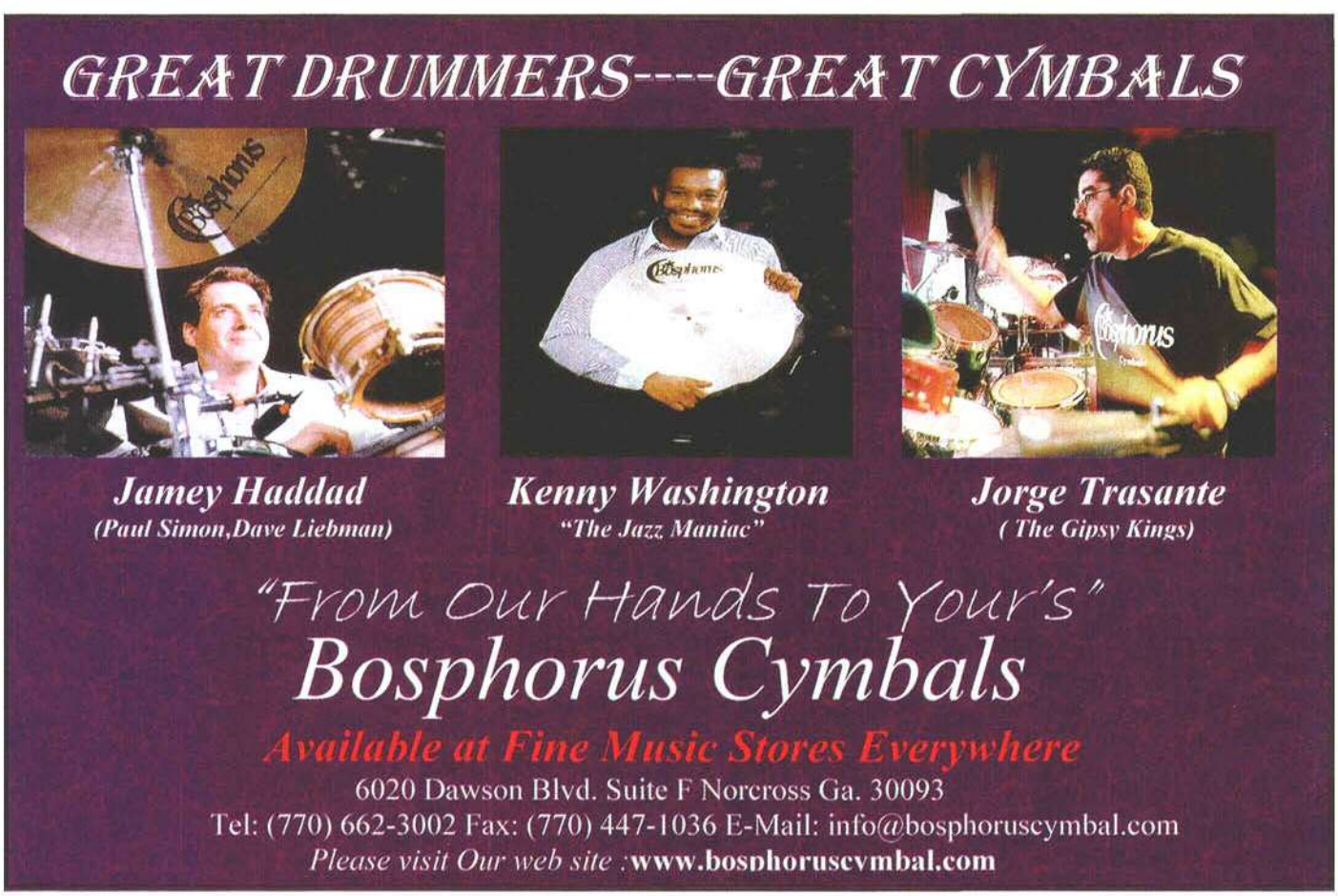
Dave: My kit is full metal all the way. I'd scaled down my kit last year, with one kick drum and the double pedal, which was cool to play, but I'd see it up on stage and it bothered me. Over in Europe, we had a huge riser and the drums just didn't look massive to me. Also, within the same week, Tama and Zildjian gave me full endorsements. So I told Tama I wanted Starclassics with two kick drums, two rack toms, a floor tom—and all chrome.

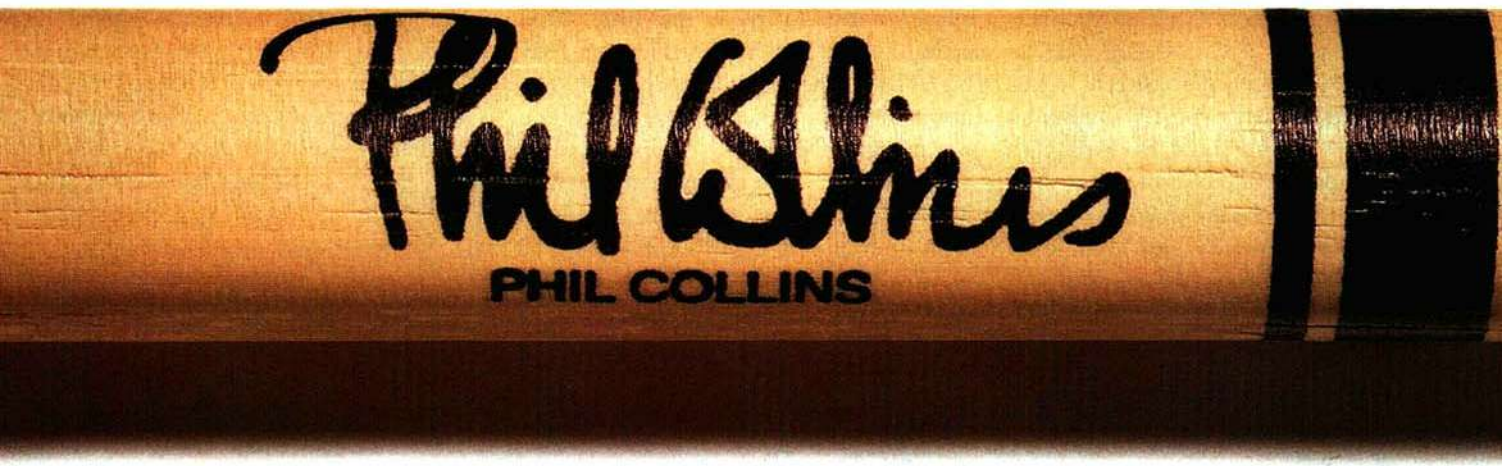
The guys at Tama were like, "Chrome? Well, we make these drums with lacquer finishes and the least amount of objects touching the shell." I said, "I don't care—I'm gonna set back drum tones twenty years if I have to." I wanted that chrome. But that has nothing to do with the drummer's ego. That's my fashion ego. It doesn't affect the sound at all, at least not in the places we're playing.

MD: Tell me about the electronics you've added to your setup.

Dave: Well, I first got the idea for all this years ago by touring with Pantera and seeing how Vinnie Paul used his ddrums. On my kit, everything's miked, but I also use a ddrum-AT on my kicks and toms, mainly for the monitor rig. I also have an Akai S2000 sampler now, and I run that into a ddrum-AT and use that for the MIDI signal. I've got an 808 by my left kick and three pads on my right side for the tambourine and other sounds.

I put all the sounds on there myself. It was a little weird adding all that to my acoustic kit, and learning how to use it all in the first place was pretty intimidating. When





There's a reason
we put his name
on the sticks.
When he throws them
to the crowd,
he wants them back.

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Dave McClain

I first got that sampler, I sat in my room for two solid days—all day and night—just learning how to put samples into it. I finally got it down, and then I looked in the mirror and had, like, a full beard. I was just totally obsessing over this stuff.

MD: Did Ross have an effect on your performance at all?

Dave: He used to be my roommate in Los Angeles, so I've known him for a long time. But the thing about working with Ross is he's not in the control room—he's got a pair of headphones on and he's right in the room with us. He'd have all of us tie on our headphones because he wanted to see us going off. He said if we weren't going off, it's just not gonna happen. He'd ask Robb to explain what the song's about to get us in the frame of mind, and then he'd say something to me like, "Remember when we used to live in that little closet eating Top Ramen? Remember that feeling? That's what I want on tape!" He was just jumping around, and you can hear him screaming on the record.

One time we were playing and Arue was just sorta staring off into space, and Ross went up to him and—WHAM!—knocked the headphones right off his head. We just kept on playing and Ross grabbed the phones and wrapped them back around Arue's head. There's a song called "Silver" and a part that's kinda mellow, and we're playing it and I see Ross is givin' me this weird look. I didn't think anything of it, but all of a sudden, this water bottle comes whipping by my head. It was still a mellow part, but he wanted to feel goosebumps, and if he doesn't feel that vibe, it's not right. On "The Blood, The Sweat, The Tears," Ross was standing right over my kit, just totally getting into it, and it was getting me into it. At the end of the song, you can hear me say, "Man, I hope this is the last take, because I'm gonna pass out," because I was just completely exhausted.

MD: Your technique is very crisp and precise. Did you go through any formal drumming education?

Dave: I started in school bands in San Antonio, Texas, and I took some lessons from the guy who introduced me to the drums. He was pretty tough on me. I studied out of Carmine Appice's book, and this teacher once turned to a page that looked hard, and I said, "I can't play that," and he

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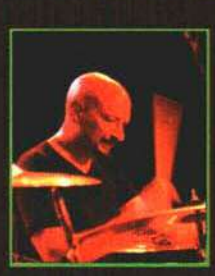

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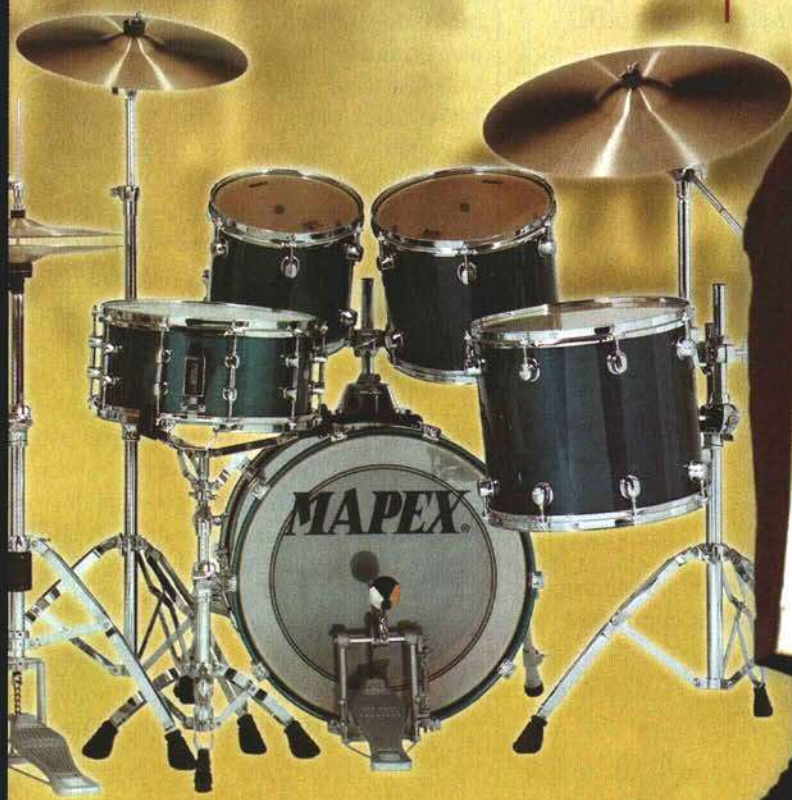

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grabbed a drumstick and smacked my hand, saying, "Don't *ever* say you can't do anything." He also did things like, if I started playing a beat, he'd grab a tambourine and start jumping around and playing along with me. I was like, "What a weirdo." But it totally inspired me. It made me feel like I accomplished something. I used to practice a lot at home, but I'd play a lot to records. My dad got me those records called *Drum Drops,* and it was all these cheesy songs, like the theme from *Charlie's Angels.*

MD: Tell me about the bands you played in before Machine Head.

Dave: When I got to be around thirteen, all I really wanted to do was get in a band, and by the time I was fifteen, I was in a band that played all these parties and even strip bars. We made just enough money to where I could crash at my friend's house and eat at Jack In The Box after the shows.

I moved to LA when I was twenty just to try to get somewhere in music. I asked some of my friends if they wanted to come along, but I ended up flying out there on my own. The day I got there, I got hooked up with a job and a roommate in this studio apartment. I was selling stuff over the phone, working at Subway, working in a juice bar at this fitness center—anything to make money. I found a band to play in pretty quickly—Ross Robinson, Dino from Fear Factory, and I were all roommates. But right when I got to LA, I wanted to leave. I saw all these people getting breaks and I was totally homesick, but I told myself I wouldn't go back until my birthday, which was ten months away. And I'm so glad I didn't go back because I probably would never have left San Antonio again.

Eventually this friend of mine in Phoenix called and told me about this band called Sacred Reich that needed a drummer. So I auditioned, got in the band, and just breathed this big sigh of relief, like "Thank God, I'm touring." I played on the records *Independent* and *Heal,* and I thought it was a really cool musical situation at the time because I could open up and show off. I thought we had a chance to really make it, but the band didn't have the drive and didn't really believe in themselves. I was with them for five years, and finally Igor [Cavalera, drummer for Sepultura] told the guys in Machine Head about me, and that's how I first got in contact with them.

MD: When you're trying out for established bands, do you think it's important to completely mirror the parts? Or is it better to embellish them with your own personality?

Dave: Auditioning is a weird thing to go through, but I think the key is being really familiar with what the band has done up to that point. Sacred Reich had a really good drummer before me, so I learned to play the drum parts exactly as they are on the record. I knew that's what they wanted to hear, and it was the same with Machine Head.

MD: What do you think gave you the edge to get these gigs?

Dave: With Machine Head, I think it's because we all have similar styles. Other people auditioned who were good, but they weren't into the whole heavy thing. It also mattered that I was fully committed. I love writing music, I love touring, I love everything about being in the band I'm in. If you don't have that kind of attitude about your own band or the band you're auditioning for—if you just treat it like a weekend job—it shows.

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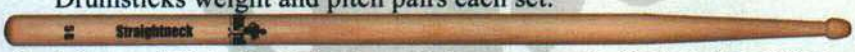

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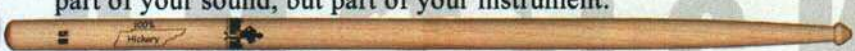

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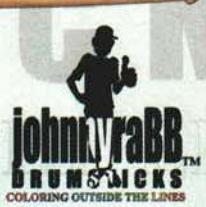

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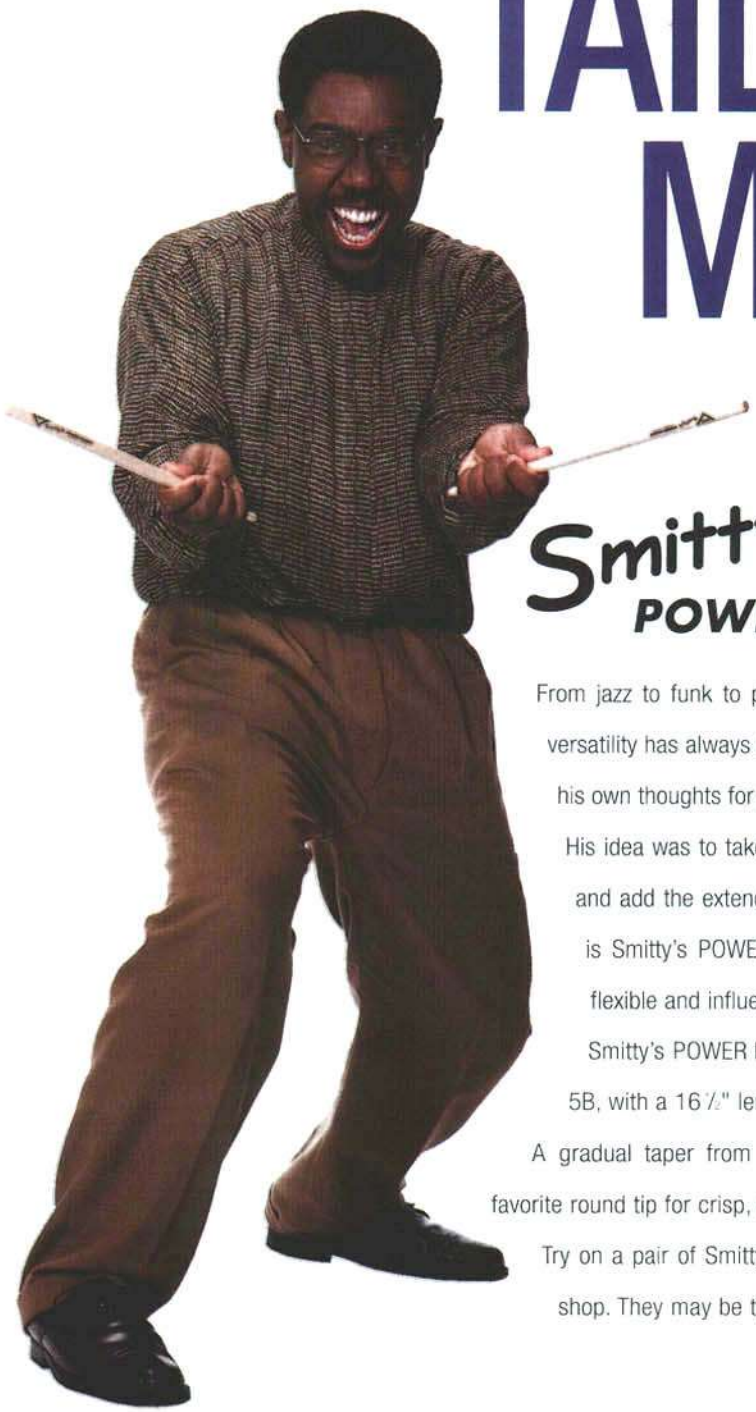

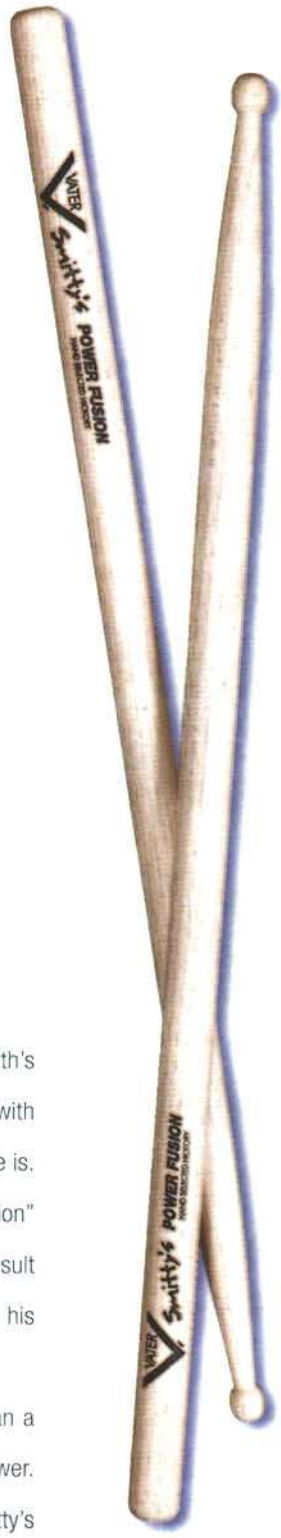

Smitty's POWER FUSION

From jazz to funk to pop to big band, Marvin "Smitty" Smith's versatility has always been his hallmark. Smitty came to us with his own thoughts for a stick that would be as versatile as he is. His idea was to take the feel and balance of Vater's "Fusion" and add the extended dynamic range he needed. The result is Smitty's POWER FUSION, a stick perfectly suited to his flexible and influential style.

Smitty's POWER FUSION has a grip slightly smaller than a 5B, with a 16 ½" length for ultimate balance, feel and power. A gradual taper from shoulder to neck finishes with Smitty's favorite round tip for crisp, clear articulation on cymbals.

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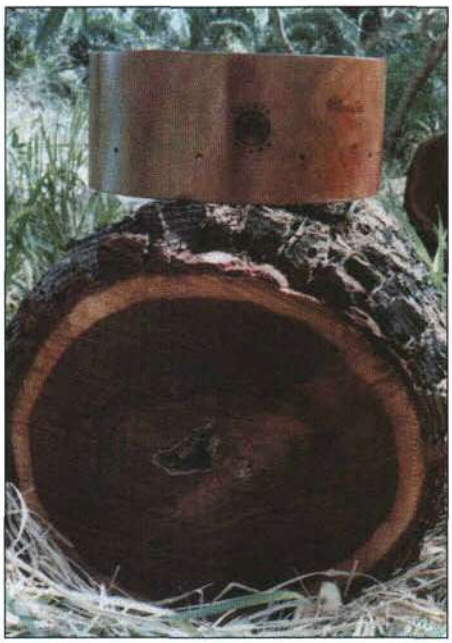
It's the ultimate expression of "everything old is new again." Spirit Drums is offering complete drumkits made the way the first percussion instruments were: from hollow logs.

The drums are bored out of solid logs of Cooktown ironwood, one of the world's hardest timbers. Sizes are available up to a 20" bass drum. Kits are sold as shell packs, and feature RIMS mounts, die-cast hoops, and custom chromed solid brass lugs. As a special order, an entire kit can be made from one tree. Any given tree experiences different climatic conditions, floods, fires, etc. that affect its growth and unique sound. Spirit claims that creating the entire kit from that one tree assures that the drums are sonically matched, and that they retain the same spirit throughout the kit.

A five-piece shell pack (including air freight from Australia) lists for $5,500. Orders may be sent directly to Spirit Drums, or taken through Ellis Drumshop in St. Paul, Minnesota, (651) 603-0848.



Johnny Gets Small

DW/Craviotto 5 1/2 x10 Snare Drum

Custom drum builder Johnny Craviotto has started thinking small. His new 5 ½ x 10 snare drum is designed to produce a high-pitched, penetrating sound while still projecting warmth and woodiness. The drum features a steam-bent solid maple shell with reinforcing hoops, and is fitted with DW lugs, rims, custom snare wires, throw-off & butt plate, and heads. It's offered in a natural satin oil finish as standard at $995. However, any of DW's finishes are available by special order. Other options include a choice of chrome or black hardware and vintage-style tube lugs.

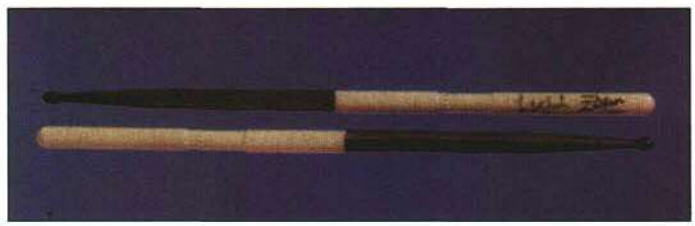
Zildjian Gets On The Stick

Carrington and Gurtu Signature Sticks And Educational Package

Jazz, pop, and world music players alike have some new drumstick options from Zildjian to consider. To begin with, jazz diva Terri Lyne Carrington's model is slightly thinner than a 5A. It features a modified bullet tip and a special cross-sanded texture to enhance durability and feel.

Percussionist extraordinaire Trilok Gurtu's walnut-stained hickory stick has two unique design features. The first is a 1 1/2"-wide groove in the grip area, said to provide a more closed grip and excellent balance. The second is a rubberized handle for improved grip and comfort. Both models are priced at $12.25 per pair.

For beginners into serious study, there's Zildjian's new educational package. It contains Bob Breithaupt's *Snare Drum Basics* video, a pair of Bob's Artist Series maple drumsticks, and a Z-Pad practice pad (made by RealFeel).



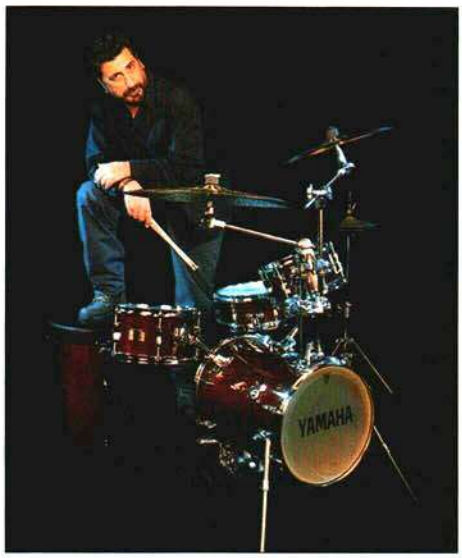
Marotta Gets Hip, Haynes Goes Copper

Yamaha Rick Marotta Signature HipGig Kit And Roy Haynes Signature Snare Drum

When you're as busy as Rick Marotta is, you appreciate portability in a drumkit. So Rick has lent his name to a new version of Yamaha's compact HipGig kit. The kit comes in a translucent cherry red finish.

The HipGig features shells of birch and mahogany. The 6x10 and 7x13 toms and 5x12 snare fit inside the 20x16 bass drum for transport. All stands are contained within the accompanying seat-case. List price is $2,500, which includes hardware and soft cases.

Speaking of hip, they don't come any hipper than jazz legend Roy Haynes. His new signature snare drum has a 5 ½ x 14 copper shell that's hand-hammered like a timpani bowl. Yamaha says this creates a drum that's "deeper and more sensitive than previous copper shells." The 10-lug drum features 2.3 mm steel Dynahoops, 25-strand high-carbon steel snares, and small, one-bolt lugs. It's priced at $695.



A Little On The Side

Rhythm Tech SideMan Percussion Mount, Improved Mountable Gig Tray, And Trick Rag

Have trouble finding just the right spot to mount that bell, block, or splash? Rhythm Tech's SideMan is a low-profile, lightweight mounting bracket that attaches to any drum's tuning screw. Its 3/8" mounting rod can accommodate all industry-standard mounted percussion. Because it attaches to the lug, it becomes semi-permanent, and can be left on the drum if desired. This makes it secure for all applications, including marching percussion.

Rhythm Tech has also improved their Mountable Gig Tray. The entire unit has been made nearly one-third lighter. In addition, the hooks below the tray have been made retractable for easier pack-up.

The newest helpful gadget from Rhythm Tech is the Trick Bag. It's a 22"-long by 12½"- deep by 10" wide nylon carrying bag for conveniently storing and transporting accessories, sheet music, spare clothes, or any other necessities.

Need A Lift?

Trick Floor Tom Conversion Kit

Trick Percussion's Conversion Kit lets you turn any 16" or 18" floor tom (with 3/8" leg mounts) into a bass drum in less than a minute! And no drilling or permanent modifications are required. Just replace two of the floor-tom legs with the provided spurs, attach Trick's lifting raiser to the counterhoop, fit your pedal to the raiser, and that's it.

This system gives drummers with larger kits the option to scale down for smaller stages, jazz gigs, or different studio possibilities. The kit is priced at $129.95.

Making A New Case

JAR Original Stick Cases And Bags

You've heard of hard-shell seat cases that match a kit's finish? How about a hard-shell *stick* case? JAH Original offers wooden stick cases (20" long by 4" in diameter) in a variety of colors. Lined with a removable black German velvet bag (that can hang on a floor tom), the cases can hold up to twenty-two pairs of sticks. They feature magnetic clasps, adjustable leather shoulder straps, and a one-year warranty, and are priced at $125.

JAH Original also makes stick bags in suede and leather. Also lined with German velvet, the bags are available in a variety of colors at $115.

Keep Your Audience Riveted
Bosphorus Sizzle Rides

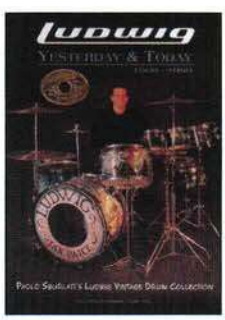
Designed for use in acoustic and lightly amplified music, sizzle rides are now available in three versions from Bosphorus. Traditional (fully lathed), Antique (partially lathed), and Turk (unlathed) models are fitted with Bosphorus's special brass split rivets. These are designed for flexibility; they can be added or removed using only pliers.

The cymbals are said to produce warm, dark undertones and clean, pronounced stick sounds. Traditional models are more open; Turks are drier and smokier, with Antiques in the middle. Sizes from 18" to 24" are available in each series.

It Pays To Accessorize
Tama Hardware Accessories

Over twenty years ago Tama invented the multi-clamp, and consequently the whole concept of add-on accessories. They're entering the new millennium with a revised and expanded line of clamps, cymbal holders, stackers, and other accessories to help drummers personalize their drum setups. The new line features new designs, new packaging, and more affordable pricing.

And What's More



For all the LUDWIG fanatics out there, the company is now offering *Ludwig—Yesterday & Today,* by Paolo Sburlati (one of the world's leading collectors of Ludwig drums). Written in both Italian and English, the 160-page book features historical information on Ludwig drums, plus dozens of photos and descriptions of specific models. The $30 book can be ordered through any Ludwig dealer.

Pennsylvania drummer Greg DeCarlo has created ZIMS CYMBAL & HARDWARE CLEANER. ZIMS is a highly effective (and relatively inexpensive) spray-on/rinse-off product sold in handy 16-oz. trigger bottles. It's available in several stores in the Northeast, or direct from the manufacturer.

TOSCO cymbals are now available in pre-selected boxed sets. The Professional Set (14" hi-hats, 16" crash, and 20" ride), the Basic Set (13" hi-hats and 16" crash), and the Expander Set (10" splash and 18" China) offer players a choice of models, sounds, and price points. Each set is hand-picked by Tosco cymbal testers to ensure a consistent sound match.

REGAL TIP now offers the Danny Reyes cowbell beater. It uses two urethane strips of different hardnesses (for a softer or harder sound) imbedded in a nylon beater and mounted on a steel shaft. The beater brings out the natural characteristics of a cowbell without the need for taping the bell. Also available from Regal Tip is a downloadable version of their catalog. The catalog can be viewed by both Macintosh and PC users from within anyone's Internet browser with Acrobat Reader, which is a free download from Adobe, for both platforms.

Slug It Out
Slug Percussion Batter Badge

For those who need a little extra protection on their snare drum head, Slug offers their improved Batter Badge. It features a thinner (.007") polycarbonate film and a larger "sweet spot" than on previous models. It also protects a larger area of the drum without muffling it more. Specially designed perforations and arms increase projection while controlling overtones. Suggested retail price is $7.95, $1 lower than the previous model.

Making Contact

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Corrections

December 1999's *Making Contact* listed incorrect contact information for Pintech Electronic Percussion. The correct information is: Pintech, Inc., 126A McDougal Court, Greenville, SC 29607, tel: (864) 288-1500, fax: (864) 288-1551, play@edrums.com, www.edrums.com.

December's *Making Contact* also listed Yamaha's Web site incorrectly. The correct site address is www.yamahadrums.com.

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MRP Custom Snare Drums

Different customs are what make the world interesting!

by Rick Van Horn
Photos by Jim Esposito

The appeal of working with a custom drum builder is the opportunity to create something unique, instead of buying what's in a manufacturer's catalog. You can get a drum tailored to your own needs, preferences, and whims. And if you're not sure of just what that might be, the builder can act as your guide, offering suggestions as to what might be the right shell material, drum size, and hardware options to achieve the look and sound of your dreams.

Mark Ross is such a drum builder. His MRP (Mark Ross Percussion) operation offers custom maple drumkits, along with custom snare drums made from a staggering variety of materials. A working drummer himself, Mark brings that perspective to his creations. He knows how special a tailor-made drum can be to a player. He also knows about budgets, so he has structured his pricing firmly within the realm of reality.

Mark sent us four examples of his snare-drum craftsmanship. We'll take a look at them individually, but a few general comments are in order first.

On The Whole

To begin with, the quality of construction on each of the drums was outstanding. Bearing edges were true and smooth. Snare beds were cut precisely, and were finished as nicely as the edges. The custom-machined post and tube lugs were flawless and attractive. All of those lugs were mounted on the shells using rubber isolators and a single-bolt system that minimized the total number of bolts penetrating the shell. The two deeper drums were fitted with state-of-the-art dropaway snare throw-offs; the two smaller models had side-throw versions. All worked smoothly and quietly.

In terms of finishes, the drums were all beautiful. But the Tequila Sunrise lacquer finish on the 6 ½x14 drum exemplified Mark Ross's considerable painting skills. There was just enough color to be attractive, but not enough to obscure the beauty of the natural wood grain. Along with that of the 4x14 bubinga drum, the gloss finish was deep and reflective. This goes, too, for the gloss applied to the nickel-plated finish on the 4x14 stainless-steel snare. Meanwhile, the brass hardware and deep, blue-white pearl wrap gave the 5 ½ x 14 maple drum a rich and classic look.

MRP
DRUMS
MRP
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MRP
DRUMS

Hits

- virtually unlimited options in shell material, design, and finish
- outstanding construction quality
- versatility of sound and performance

Though deep and warm-sounding, this 6½ x14 maple snare was also crisp, thanks to its 42-strand power snares.

A High Standard

Perhaps the most "standard" MRP model we tried was the 6½ x14 maple. With its 8-ply shell and 45° edges, it's similar to many "production" drums on the market. However, it also features MRP's single-post low-mass lugs, and it's fitted with a 42-strand snare set. The shell also has no reinforcing hoops, which gives it a little less mass and a bit more resonating capability.

I think Mark Ross intended this to be the "big gun" in our test group. Fitted with an Evans Power Center head, it appeared ready to take on some serious impact. So that's what I gave it. The result was an equally big, full sound. The depth of the shell gave the drum a respectable amount of bottom, while the 42-strand snares kept the sound nice and crisp. The 8-ply shell was thick enough to provide good reflectivity for high end and volume, but thin enough to let the "woodiness" of the sound come through.

I probably wouldn't use this drum on a low-volume gig. Not because it couldn't be played quietly—it could, and with good response. But that would be like driving a high-performance race car and never shifting out of first gear. This is a drum with lots and lots of headroom. It would serve best in an amplified situation where it could really open up and shout!

A New Old Drum

MRP maple snares are usually made from 5-, 6-, 8-, or 10-ply shells with 45° bearing edges, matched by a 45° countercut to the outside. This edge design has become pretty standard with all drum manufacturers large and small. It offers a nice blend of shell resonance and drumhead attack, for what has become a "contemporary" sound. However, since Mark is a true *custom* builder, I wanted to give him a challenge. I asked him to create, as closely as possible, a "vintage"-style drum, similar to the snares of the '30s and '40s. These featured very thin shells (usually with reinforcing hoops) and very rounded bearing edges designed to accommodate calf heads.

So Mark came up with a 5 ½ x14 5-ply drum with 5-ply hoops. To this he added half-moon-shaped bearing edges. Just to complete the image he wrapped the drum in a "Polar Ice" pearl covering and fitted it with tube lugs. All the ingredients of a vintage drum were there, improved by the use of a modern snare strainer.

The outcome was impressive. When I played the drum I had the feeling that I had time-warped back to the swing era. The sound was rich and deep, without being muddy. It wasn't a deep *pitch*, it was a depth of *tone*. The drum had a wealth of overtones, covering the sonic spectrum and lending itself to a variety of tunings. I could get it down into "fatback" range easily, and I could also crank it up to where it could definitely make itself heard in most amplified situations. I liked it best in the middle, though. I even took things a step further by replacing the Evans Genera Gl batter with a Remo FiberSkyn 3, which is a very calf-like model. The

Thin 5-ply shells and reinforcing rings and a rounded bearing edge gave this drum a sound as classic as its look.

head and the drum seemed made for each other; the sound was fat, warm, and very satisfying.

What this drum *didn't* have (by deliberate design) was the cracking attack of the "contemporary" double-45° bearing-edge design. Its thin shell also gave it a warmth and depth that thicker-shelled drums are not intended to produce. As a result, this wouldn't be a drum for everyone. But it would certainly appeal to players seeking the functional advantages of a brand-new snare with the acoustic character of a vintage drum. It also serves to illustrate Mark Ross's ability to create a truly "tailor-made" instrument.

Half drum, half tank! The shine on this baby comes from its triple-chrome-plated, 3/8"-thick, solid stainless-steel shell.

It's A Steel

Okay, let's get one thing straight. The MRP 4x14 stainless-steel model is a shallow drum, but it ain't a lightweight...by a *damn* sight. At 23½ pounds, inch for inch this may be the heaviest drum I've ever encountered. Its 3/8"-thick solid shell provides an incredibly dense and reflective surface. That, in turn, translates as a powerful, cutting sound. (Marshall stacks? *Hah.)*

Of course, you don't have to think just in terms of taking your guitarist's head off. The drum is more versatile than that. For example, it has incredible sensitivity; the snares responded if I so much as *breathed* on the batter head. So this would be a great snare for playing brushes on a jazz gig, or even for playing classical percussion parts on a concert stage. In fact, it would be a terrific drum for any application where a high-pitched, penetrating snare sound was called for. (Just be sure you have a sturdy stand, and that the handles on your bag or case are in good shape.)

Something Exotic

MRP offers over 167 varieties of exotic woods as alternatives to the more standard maple. (There are even some exotic maples!) Mark Ross believes that such an alternative not only provides a different sound, but also helps put your personal signature on your work. And boy do these babies *look* nice.

Hand-machined brass lugs and a rich, all-bubinga shell distinguish this exotic beauty.

The representative Exotic model that Mark sent us was a 4x14 solid-wood, steam-bent bubinga shell with matching bubinga reinforcement hoops. Like its steel counterpart, the drum's shell was about 3/8" thick, as were the hoops. Of course, this drum wasn't as heavy as the steel model. But bubinga is a fairly dense and heavy wood, so the drum is still heavier than a comparable maple-ply model would be.

The dense, heavy shell also provides a hard, reflective surface, which translates as volume and projection from the drum. But unlike the steel drum, the bubinga also provides an element of "woodiness." It's a subtle difference; the effect would be greater on a deeper shell with more wood. But it is noticeable. The steel-shell drum has a "crack" that would pierce armor plate; the bubinga's tonality is slightly drier and less aggressive. (But *only* slightly.)

The Rest Of The Story

In addition to the models we tested, MRP also offers solid-block and phosphor bronze snare drums. Delivery time varies with the material and finish, but on average a maple snare takes two to three weeks, a steel snare takes eight weeks, a bronze snare takes eight to ten weeks, and an exotic wood model takes between six and twelve weeks.

MRP drums aren't cheap, but they are certainly competitive with other custom drums—and are priced lower than those of many major manufacturers. In any event, given the sound of the drums we played, along with their quality of construction, you'll definitely get what you pay for.

MRP Drums deals directly with consumers. Contact Mark Ross at MRP Drums, 514 W. Valley Stream Blvd., Valley Stream, NY 11580, tel: (516) 568-2820, fax: (516) 825-4485, email: mrpdrums.aol.com, or surf to www.mrpdrums.com.

On The Mark

6½x14 MRP Maple Snare Drum

shell:	8-ply, no reinforcing hoops
bearing edges:	45°, with 45° countercut to the outside
finish:	Tequila Sunrise (yellow to orange fade) lacquer
hardware:	2.3 mm counterhoops, strainer, butt plate, tension rods, and 42-strand wire snares, all chrome-plated
lugs:	20 single-post lugs, machined from solid carbon steel
heads:	Evans coated Power Center batter, clear 300 GL snare side
price:	$505

5½x14 MRP Maple Snare Drum

shell:	5-ply, with 5-ply reinforcing hoops
bearing edges:	rounded (half-moon)
finish:	Polar Ice laminate wrap
hardware:	2.3 mm counterhoops, tension rods, and 20-strand wire snares, all brass-plated; throw-off and butt plate chrome-plated
lugs:	10 double-ended tube-style lugs, machined from solid brass
heads:	Evans coated C1 single-ply medium-weight batter, clear 300 GL snare side
price:	$585

4x14 MRP Solid Stainless-Steel Snare Drum

shell:	one-piece solid stainless steel, 3/8" thick
bearing edges:	45°, with 45° countercut to the outside
finish:	highly polished nickel plate
hardware:	4.5 mm die-cast counterhoops, strainer, butt plate, tension rods, and 20-strand wire snares, all chrome-plated
lugs:	20 single-post offset lugs, machined from solid carbon steel, chrome plated
heads:	Evans coated C1 single-ply medium-weight batter, hazy RESO 200 snare side
price:	$860

4x14 MRP Exotic Wood Snare Drum

shell:	solid one-piece steam-bent bubinga, with bubinga reinforcing hoops
bearing edges:	45°, with 45° countercut
finish:	hand-rubbed oil with clear gloss exterior
hardware:	2.3 mm counterhoops, strainer, butt plate, tension rods, and 20-strand wire snares, all brass-plated
lugs:	20 single-post lugs, machined from solid brass
heads:	Evans coated G1 single-ply medium-weight batter, hazy RESO 200 snare side
price:	$785

Remo El Conguero Congas And Valencia Bongos, Timbales, And Bells

A leader in world percussion gets the Latin beat.

by Victor Rendon

The latest addition to Remo's world percussion is a line of professional-quality congas, bongos, and timbales. For the purposes of this review, I tested each instrument in isolation to hear how it sounded alone. Then I took the drums and bells out with a live band. This is where one really finds out how a product holds up, and how it sounds in relation to everything else around it. My "laboratory" was a Latin band that plays straight-ahead salsa as well as Latin jazz. The conguero and bongo player played their respective instruments; I played the timbales, and we all tried the bells.

El Conguero Congas

The El Conguero congas are similar in design to Remo's Poncho Sanchez Signature Series, reviewed in the January 1998 *MD*. Except for the smaller quinto, all the drums have a wide belly tapering down to a 5" (quinto and conga), 7½" (tumba), or 8" (super tumba) opening. Each drum is fitted with six crown-shaped wrench-operated lugs and "soft-touch" rims cushioned with black rubber (very easy on the hands). The same material is used to protect the bottom holes of the drums from impact, and to keep the drums from sliding on hard surfaces. All hardware comes in an attractive black finish.

Visual inspection revealed excellent workmanship and some very nice features. For example, the tension screw plates are held

Hits

- El Conguero congas are light and easy to carry
- Mondo conga heads are resistant to weather changes
- Valencia timbales have a simple design and come with an excellent stand
- all drum models offer good sound and projection
- Valencia cha cha bells have nice ring, body, and projection

Misses

- El Conguero quinto lacks projection without amplification
- El Conguero sparkle finishes scratch easily
- Valencia bongos feel slightly heavy for their size
- no brass version of Valencia timbales available
- 7" Valencia mambo bell does not project well

on the shell with hex screws. A rubber gasket between the plate and the screw helps to increase shell resonance. Each drum also comes with a strap handle that's firmly bolted and lays flat against the shell.

Natural Synthetics

Remo's shells aren't made of wood. But then, they aren't really *not* made of wood, either. They're made of Acousticon, which is a synthetic material made from a combination of natural wood fibers and specially formulated resins. One immediate advantage they offer over traditional wood shells is that they're lighter. I carried the quinto and conga in two separate lightweight bags, and they felt lighter than most other makes on the market.

Wood appeals to some musicians for its natural tone and warmth. Fiberglass appeals to others for its projection, bright tonality, and durability. Acousticons offer an excellent compromise between the two. It has been acclaimed for its low-pitched fundamental and projection, while offering the added benefits of strength, weather-resistance, and reduced weight. The shells also have a molded bearing edge and a molded bottom for added protection. The interior of the shell has a black finish, and it's fitted with metal plates to support the outer tension-screw plates.

The drums also include Remo's Mondo Type 4 FiberSkyn 3 conga heads. They look like regular calfskin heads, but are actually synthetic, which makes them waterproof and not affected by humidity. They give the drum a bigger sound with more projection than calf, hold their tuning better, and are easier on the hands.

They Don't Look Like Barrels

The El Conguero drums came in a sparkle paint finish that reminded me of the 1960s. The finish looks very attractive on the shell. Even the tension screw plates are sprinkled with gold sparkle. This gives them a nice contrast against the black hardware.

My only question is the durability of the finish. All conga drums eventually get scratched through normal wear and tear. This happens especially when the drums are played by a seated conguero. In fact, one of the drums became scratched during a performance with the band. The paint did not peel, but it did seem to become scratched very easily. Perhaps a more durable protective coating could be added to remedy this problem.

Sound Decisions

In isolation, the drums were on the ringy side, lacking the warmth of wood drums with calfskin heads. However, they all sounded very good in a band environment. They were played on a

hard surface by a conguero who was seated. Open tones were easy to produce. They tended to sound high-ended, with some overtones. Slaps were also easy to get, but lacked bite. Bass tones were good. The only drum that had a little trouble projecting through the band was the quinto; all the others did fine. The projection did improve with miking.

All in all, the El Conguero drums would be worthy considerations for players who equally value sound, looks, playing comfort, and ease of transport.

Valencia Bongos

Remo's Valencia bongos exhibit the same qualities of excellent workmanship as their conga brethren. They too are made of Acousticon, and come fitted with traditional steel rims and FiberSkyn 3 heads.

The two drums are joined by a bolt passing through a block between the two shells in the traditional fashion. The overall length is comfortable, but I found the weight to be a little heavy. After I removed the hardware, the weight dropped from 14 lbs. to only 6 lbs. So the hardware provides the bulk of the weight. Of course, this can be gotten used to by the player, but if Remo could reduce hardware weight on future models it would be a plus.

The bongos had no problems in terms of sound. The smaller drum had a crisp, popping sound. The larger drum sounded full and round. I expected to hear a "ringy" sound from both drums because of the FiberSkyn heads, but this didn't occur. (This may be due to the smaller diameter and nature of bongos.) If anything, the heads *enhanced* the projection of sound with their high-ended qualities.

Our test bongos came in an attractive green sparkle finish. Remo also offers them in the same finishes as the congas. Nice looks, nice sound...nice drums!

Valencia Timbales

Valencia timbales are a medium-high-end line that proved to be well-suited for the working environment. They have a pleasant, simple design (no ribs or hand-hammered figures) with six tuning lugs. The interiors are fitted with metal plates to support the outer tension lugs. The bearing edge on the top and bottom of each shell is rolled in.

The drums come with a sturdy, tiltable, double-braced stand that I liked for a couple of reasons. First, it features a hard rubber spacer and a sliding cowbell-mounting bracket, allowing the adjustment of the bell position. In addition, the cowbell post is 9" in height, allowing ample space for two or three bells and/or blocks. But what I liked the most is that the stand is light in weight without sacrificing the sturdiness of double-braced legs. The bottom part of the stand is also shorter than many others, making it easier to place in a case or bag. In addition, the height adjustment is flexible so that the player can choose between a standing or sitting position.

Unfortunately, at present there is no brass version of these timbales available from Remo. The steel drums, however, demonstrated some very good qualities. They produced a crisp and penetrating "paila" sound when the side of the shell was struck—as you'd expect from a steel shell. They also had a slight high ring

when the drums were played in isolation, which I didn't care for. But in fairness, that ring was not noticeable when I was playing with the band.

The single and double paila easily cut through the amplification and other instruments without effort. The solid-steel hoops added to the full sound of rimshots, abanicos (lead-in rolls), and fills, all of which cut through the band easily. I was able to crank up the tuning of the small timbal to get a nice "high ring." Some timbales can lose their tension (coming down in pitch and losing their bite) when played hard. This didn't happen with the Valencia timbales; they stayed in tune throughout the gig.

My only real criticism of the Valencias is that I prefer a darker sound on the paila (shell). But that's a matter of personal taste and should be decided upon by the individual. Otherwise, the Valencias proved to be very comparable to other timbales on the market, at a very affordable price.

Valencia Bells

Valencia bells are designed to be used with the congas, bongos, and timbales. Our test group included three cha cha bells, two mambo bells, a bongo hand bell, and a 3-tone agogo bell.

I especially liked the cha cha bells. They had a nice ring, with plenty of body and projection but not a lot of overtones. These qualities were consistent between the cha cha sizes, but the mambo bells had more individual characters. The larger model (9" long with a 3" neck) had good body and projection. Its pitch was too high for my taste, but it might appeal to some players. The shorter model (7" long with a 3½" neck) didn't quite make it, sound-wise. The sound lacked body and ring. I suspect that the thick welding and shorter length may have something to do with the restriction of sound. This bell didn't project well through the band and had to be taken off the timbale post after a couple of numbers.

The bongo player loved the hand bell, as did the other percussionists. It had a nice, fat sound at the mouth and nice high tones (without overtones) in the neck area. Projection was excellent, and it blended very well with other instruments.

The 3-tone agogo bell is really three cone-shaped bells inserted within each other on a mounting bracket. Various open and muffled sounds, glissandos, and other combinations can be played on it. This bell isn't really an essential item for a salsa type of band, but it can be used as an effect or as an agogo bell in Brazilian music.

Latin Data

El Conguero Congas

sizes: 11 " quinto, 11¾" conga, 12½ " tumba, 13" super tumba
shells: Remo Acousticon (resin-impregnated wood fiber), approx. ½" thick
heads: Remo Mondo Type 4 FiberSkyn 3 conga heads (Mylar and poly-spun fibers)
finish: painted sparkle, in white, black, red, and blue
height: 30"
weight: quinto and conga: 25 lbs.; tumba and super tumba: 30 lbs.
price: quinto: $385, conga: $395, tumba: $415, super tumba: $435

Valencia Bongos

sizes: 7" macho (small drum), 8½" hembra (large drum)
shells: Remo Acousticon (resin-impregnated wood fiber), approx. ½" thick
heads: Remo FiberSkyn 3 bongo heads (Mylar and poly-spun fibers)
finish: painted sparkle, in green
length: 17" overall for combined drums
weight: 14 lbs.
price: $215

Valencia Timbales

sizes: 14" and 15", 7" deep
shells: 2 mm-thick steel
heads: Remo Renaissance RA
finish: chrome plating
price: $360, including stand

Valencia Bells

models: cha cha (three sizes), mambo (two sizes), bongo (hand), and 3-tone agogo
prices: $21.50 to $36.50, depending on model and size

Meinl Amun Cymbals

When you're named for an Egyptian god, you'd better have something special to offer.

by Rick Van Horn

Meinl is a company that just keeps coming at you. They have their time-tested Raker line for rock playing. They have their Custom Cymbal Shop series for esoteric sounds and "one of a kind" uniqueness. They have their Classics series for general-purpose playing. They have a slew of entry-level and budget cymbals covering several price points. They even recently introduced a new line called Candela, which is targeted at Latin and hand percussionists. So what's left?

Well.... What about a line of jazz cymbals?

"Sounds *great,"* I hear the Meinl designers say. "Let's create one. But once we get a really great jazz sound, let's apply the same qualities to heavier cymbals to let the rock guys in on the fun! And then, just to add a little mystery, let's name the new line Amun, after an ancient Egyptian god."

We didn't get the entire Amun line to test. (Thank goodness!) But we did get a tasty batch of representative examples. After spending some time with the cymbals, I've come to the conclusion that those Meinl folks are a crafty bunch. They've taken characteristics usually found in very different types of cymbals, and they've combined them to come up with a totally new animal. They've started with B8 alloy (generally quite high-pitched and bright), then applied shaping and hammering usually given to lower-pitched, more controlled (read: jazz) cymbals. They've mixed and matched weights to further affect pitch and to create both low- and high-volume models. And just to add some spice they've made all of the rides (thin and thick alike) available with extra-large bells.

Hits

- entire test group produced a unique combination of dark, warm tonality and crystal clarity
- 20" thin Big Bell ride offers a jazz character, with big-bell power
- 13" medium hi-hats had great stick response and smooth overall sound

Misses

- 13" medium hi-hats lacked a solid "chick" sound
- 8" splash had gongy undertone

Meinl describes the character of the Amun line as "crystal clean sound with hammered warmth."

So what we have here, folks, are bright-sounding dark cymbals...or mellow power cymbals...or...well, let's take a look.

Goin' For A Ride

We tested three rides: a 20" medium, a 20" thin Big Bell, and a 22" Powerful Big Bell. Of the three, the 20" thin Big Bell was the most "jazz-oriented." It had the lowest pitch, the most wash, and the darkest overall tonality. But its big bell also gave it plenty of power when it was really whacked (and provided an interesting alternative striking site not generally found on a true "jazz" ride).

The 20" medium had a higher pitch and a very defined stick attack. It offered moderate spread and a very musical overall sound. One of our editors liked it best with a wood-tipped stick; I

Quick Looks

New From Pro-Mark

Pro-Mark has recently released a bevy of sticks, brushes, and percussion mallets. Here's a quick evaluation of these new accessories.

To begin with, Pro-Mark's latest drumsticks should meet the needs of a variety of players. The SD4 Bill Bruford model is light and fast, not only because of its size, which falls between a 5A and 7A, but also because it's made of maple. The diminutive barrel-shaped bead provides a focused sound on a ride cymbal. The TX9AW Carl Allen stick is fatter and longer than traditional jazz models, but light enough for speed and finesse. Its elongated teardrop bead (which verges on an arrowhead) produces a fat but articulate ride cymbal sound. The TX718 Acid Jazz model is a medium-weight hickory stick with a small, rounded bead that is effective on the smaller cymbals typically used in the acid-jazz style. It has enough body for moderate-volume rock as well. The TX702 Intruder fits in between a 5A and a 5B (which is a fairly tight fit) and is especially beefy in the tip and neck. List price for all four models, which are available in wood tip only, is $10.50 per pair.

Pro-Mark's TB6 Telescopic Brush has the best features of traditional wire brushes, including a notched handle that allows one to lock in a preferred "spread." These were designed for players who like to slap brushes as much as swish them, and they feature thicker wire strands and a reinforced metal handle (with rubber grip) that will stand up to some serious smacking. Traditional jazz players might find them too heavy, but brush bashers will like the durability. List price is $25.95.

Concert percussionists who need to make quick changes between regular drumsticks and round, felt beaters will appreciate Pro-Mark's

thought it really sang with a nylon tip. It's a nice choice to have.

The Powerful Big Bell ride was indeed powerful...and loud. Although big and heavy, it offered much more personality and character than many "power" rides—still on the dark and washy side. Its weight made it a little clangy when it was played at low volume; it needed to be struck with authority to really open up. Once again, its big bell generated plenty of resonance and spread, and really cut through when struck with the shoulder of a stick.

Multi-Percussion Sticks, as will drumset players who need different effects during a single tune. The SD5 is based on a 5A drumstick, and the SD7 is based on a 2B. The drumstick end has a small, barrel-shaped bead. The felt ball is glued on and also attached by a screw, which, according to Pro-Mark, enables players to "create additional interesting sound effects on cymbals and other percussion instruments." Well, maybe, but even if it just holds the felt ball onto the end of the stick its purpose is justified. List price is $23.50 per pair.

Geared for the school market, Pro-Mark's new Future Pro Pack and Scholastic Pro Pack provide the proper tools for aspiring "total percussionists." The Future Pro Pack includes one pair each of Pro-Mark's Future Pro snare drum sticks, xylo/bell mallets, and accessory mallets, which are designed for small hands. They are packed in a simple but sturdy stick bag. List price is $59.95.

The Scholastic Pro Pack is aimed at older students and contains professional-size snare drum sticks, timpani mallets, xylo-bell mallets, and yarn marimba/vibe mallets, packed in a professional-quality stick bag with three inside compartments as well as an outer pouch. The timpani mallets are better suited for drum corps use than concert

band. Current trends in marimba and vibraphone instruction would be better served if four yarn mallets were included rather than two. But Pro-Mark will customize the packs on request. List price is $114.95.

Rick Mattingly

Here's Your Hat

The 13" medium hi-hats sounded *fabulous* when played with sticks: sweet, clean, moderately low in pitch, and very quick. Their "bark" was smooth and hissy rather than aggressive. They were just a joy to play in all respects but one: the elusive "chick" sound. They didn't have much. Although described as "medium" weight, they seemed very light and thin. Such hi-hats simply aren't capable of producing the same sound when closed as heavier cymbals can. It's a matter of physics.

The "chick" the 13"s did produce would probably be more than sufficient for a low-volume lounge or jazz gig. And considering how much I liked every other aspect of these hi-hats, I'd go to great lengths to try to enhance their "chick" performance for all other musical applications. I'd use a rubber cup instead of a felt washer to support the bottom cymbal, and a clutch with rubber grips to hold the top one. I'd also adjust the tilter carefully to maximize its effect. The effort would be worth it.

Now, I wouldn't have to do *anything* to get a great chick sound from the 14" Powerful hi-hats. Their weight and size produced plenty of that characteristic. On the other hand, they weren't as subtle and delicate-sounding as their smaller siblings. Surprisingly, though, their shape and hammering kept them down in moderately deep pitch territory. To my ears, these sounded like good general-purpose hi-hats, with a touch more character than many other models that fit that description.

Heart Of Darkness

Speaking of character, the Amun crashes had it...in spades. As a matter of fact, these are my favorites among all the Meinl cymbals I've heard. As a group, they offered that mysterious combination of qualities mentioned earlier: a dark, moderately low-pitched tonality reminiscent of dedicated "jazz cymbal" lines, with a bright, shimmering overtone that adds both projection and musicality.

When played alone, the 14" medium crash sounded a little clangy. But when played with the kit, its weight gave it a very pretty, clear, glassy tonality. Its pitch was definitely on the low side of medium, though, and it was thin enough to speak out and then decay quickly. As such it would make a great crash in a low-volume situation, or a wonderful punctuation cymbal in a higher-volume one. It might also make a super studio crash.

The 16" thin crash produced a dark, low fundamental tone, making it very applicable to jazz or other settings where you wouldn't want a piercing crash. Its thin weight made it very splashy, further preventing it from being too aggressive. Yet it had that high, clear shimmer on top, so it carried well, even against the sound of a drumkit played hard. Very nice.

The 18" thin was everything the 16" model was, and then some. It had a *very* dark, washy sound, and lots of rumbling spread. It was definitely the lowest-pitched cymbal I tried, and I think it would make a *terrific* crash for jazz, big band, or any other application calling for a crash with character.

Although smaller than the 18", the 17" medium crash would be the "breakout voice" of our test group. It was much higher in pitch than the other crashes, and offered much more sustain. But it was by no means a one-dimensional "power" crash. It had a full range of overtones, blended well with the other crashes, and really projected that crystalline shimmer I keep talking about. Very tasty.

Just For Effect

In the realm of "special effects" cymbals the Amun line contains medium splashes and medium Chinas. I tried 8" and 10" splashes and an 18" China.

I was disappointed in the 8" splash. To its credit it produced a fairly low pitch and dark tonality, in keeping with the crashes I played. But it just wasn't very "splashy." When struck it produced only a moderate "explosion," then settled into an unappealing, sustained undertone that was audible even along with loud drums.

The 10" splash was something else entirely. This cymbal opened up to a full, splashy explosion—then died away quickly without any lingering aftertones at all. It too had a dark fundamental tone, but its size gave it the body necessary to cut through amplified music if need be.

Due to its weight, the 18" medium China doesn't have the kind of trashy wash that thinner Chinas can produce. However, the Amun did have a very musical tonality. It was actually higher in pitch than one might expect from this line. It also had a very pure, almost gong-like sustained tone. Whether this is good or bad would depend on your taste. But it would certainly help the cymbal make itself be heard.

Amun: Rah

Okay, maybe my pun-ish reference to the Egyptian sun god's name is a little corny. But I really did like the Amuns I tested. Meinl feels that these new cymbals are suitable for all styles of music. I can certainly hear them on jazz or pop gigs. And although I didn't get to hear any of the Powerful crashes, I wouldn't be surprised if they could hold their own on most amplified rock gigs, too.

The line offers an admirable combination of dark character and bright clarity. I simply have never heard that from a single series of cymbals. I'm impressed.

Amun Tally

8" splash	$96
10" splash	$116
13" medium hi-hats, pair	$292
14" Powerful hi-hats, pair	$344
14" medium crash	$172
16" thin crash	$240
17" medium crash	$270
18" thin crash	$292
18" medium China	$292
20" medium ride	$360
20" thin Big Bell ride	$360
22" Powerful Big Bell ride	$440

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Boom Theory Bop Deluxe Kit

by Rich Watson

What has Boom Theory done lately for the world of electronic percussion? To borrow a phrase from Monty Python: "And now for something completely different...."

Al Adinolfi is a madman. Boom Theory's self-proclaimed president/janitor will tell you so himself. With little provocation he'll rant about many things, but none so passionately as electronic drumming. Like most madmen, he looks at things differently. But rare among them, he then creates practical tools to serve his iconoclastic vision. Al's vision of electronic drumming's potential is realized in the latest generation of Space Muffin trigger drums and the 0.0 sound module. (0.0? I told you he looks at things differently.) Al sent us a Bop Deluxe kit to explore. Actually, his words were "Beat the [yogurt] out of 'em." Happy to oblige you, Al.

Hits

- exceptionally "real" look and feel
- state-of-the-art triggering
- toms mount on bass drum

Misses

- programming some layered sounds is awkward and time-consuming
- only six tom and two ride cymbal sounds

See Me...

"Beauty is only skin deep?" "You can't judge a book by its cover?" Bull nuggets. Like it or not, the masses still judge drums by their appearance. And when the "drums" are electronic pads, the masses often laugh. Then insiders who should know better—fellow musicians and producers—start worrying about what the masses think, and ultimately weigh in against the pads. Which is probably a big reason electronic drums haven't penetrated the often image-conscious music genres their capabilities would best serve.

Enter Space Muffins. They look *so* acoustic, no one in the audience will suspect that they're not "real." No one will prejudge or reclassify your band because you're playing those...*rubber things.* (Of course if you're playing Space Muffins and people are still laughing, it's probably due to your playing, in which case you have even *more* to worry about.)

The Boom Theory review kit drums were small, befitting their Bop Deluxe moniker. (Some drummers might prefer the Classic configuration, whose drum sizes, including a 14x22 kick, are more standard.) Even so, the consensus around the *MD* office is that they looked really cool—and really real. Probably because they

Unique among electronic drums: a bass drum-mounted tom holder

are real. Real maple shells. Real wrap finishes. And real Remo drumheads.

Even Space Muffins' hardware is the same stuff found on Boom Theory's acoustic and electro-acoustic lines. The small, teardrop-shaped aluminum lugs are available in a choice of chrome or brass plating, brushed aluminum, and a variety of powder-coat colors. The Ax Mount, a standard chrome-plated tom/cymbal arm mount with two omni-ball tom holders, eliminates the need for extra floor stands or a rack—and the floor space they would occupy. It also looks typically "acoustic." And a "pedestal" mounted to the hoop of the Bop Deluxe's 18" kick allows the beater to strike the center of the head.

Aside from the 0.0 module, which looks a lot like a standard rack-mountable line mixer, the only thing that might give the Space Muffins away are the cables that run from the drums to the module. A couple of us were puzzled by the mounted tom outputs' location near the front of the drums, which made their cables more conspicuous. We learned that this positioning matches up with Boom Theory's integrated rack system (not included in the review kit), with ten inputs and just a single cable out. But despite the cables, no one is likely to laugh at a set of Space Muffins—except perhaps if you divulge their name.

Feel Me...Touch Me...

Infatuation based upon appearance alone is fleeting. (At least that's what I heard them say on *Love Line.)* So let's get in touch with the feel of Boom Theory's Space Muffins.

Not all trigger pads are created equal. Some drummers adapt to anything, but most prefer pads whose size, shape, and feel are similar to those of "real" drums. This is another area where Space Muffins shine. First, their heads are close to the size of standard kit drums. So you're not apt to miss them, as can happen with dinky pads. Second, they're round, which, together with their size, lends to a familiar drumset layout. And third, while their heads seem a bit stiffer than heads on an acoustic drum due to the foam rubber beneath them, their degree of bounce is *very* authentic. Also, they can be tensioned with a standard drumkey to feel slightly looser or tighter.

The Muffins' feel is also enhanced by their real steel rims. The soft head/hard rim *thang* is familiar territory to acoustic drummers. And while this falls into the shadowy psycho-acoustic corner of drumming ergonomics, the acoustic *thwack* produced by the heads and the rims is oh-so satisfying. To this same end, the bass drum produces a markedly lower-pitched thump than the other drums. So even "unplugged" they are much more fun to play than the standard practice pad kit. Of course old Miss Bagledorf in 3E might rather you played on some nice quiet rubber pads. But hey, she'll play no role in your climb to mega-stardom anyway!

Hear Me

Many performance elements contribute to electronic drums' authenticity. Triggering speed, pad sensitivity, dynamic range, and freedom from double and false triggering are critical. In all areas, Space Muffins score a ten.

Triggering speed is an area where Al Adinolfi is particularly obsessed. Signals from the 0.0 pad inputs go to a dual synth engine at 64 kHz, which is double the MIDI rate. According to Al, the 0.0's maximum scan time (the time taken to "read" and "deliver" the incoming signal) is "a verifiable 1.75 milliseconds," by far the fastest in the industry. Equally astounding is its analog signal-to-MIDI conversion, which has its own dedicated processor. Al claims that the 0.0 will trigger (via MIDI) a Roland TD-7 or TD-10 faster than those modules can be triggered through their own inputs.

Dynamic range and tracking on the Muffins were superb. Unlike some systems I've played, they have a smooth and exceptionally long path between the lightest/softest and hardest/loudest hits. Best of all, adapting the triggers' responsiveness to my playing style was a breeze.

Boom Theory is the only company to have mastered pad interaction enough to mount their toms on the bass drum with absolutely no false triggering between them. Credit the drums' baffling system, which the company calls Digi-Trap. I call it amazing.

Even more impressive is the independence/interaction between the head and rim triggers on the dual-send snare drum. With the head trigger's threshold set at 1, the pad tracked my very softest hits. At 2 it worked well enough even for a typical light jazz gig. At the recommended standard threshold of 2 or 3, the head trigger

didn't pick up the signal produced even when I really whacked on the rim. The rim trigger *did* false-trigger when I played hard on the head, but I was able to eliminate this by raising its threshold and cross-talk-cancellation values. This still left it plenty sensitive for typical rimshot and cross-stick playing.

This degree of isolation is not necessary for standard snare drum/snare drum rim sound combinations, where interaction is actually desirable, or some other combinations of related instruments. But it's nice to know that if you want to assign disparate instruments, such as a tom, whistle, gong, or any other wacky sounds to share the dual-send drum, you can, without fear of their triggering each other.

This discrete performance was all the more commendable because, unlike most modern dual-zone pads, Space Muffins don't employ a switching mechanism that makes the two signals mutually exclusive. When you play a rimshot on a Space Muffin, the sound assigned to the rim is *in addition* to the sound assigned to the head, not *instead* of it—just like on a real snare drum.

Boom Theory doesn't currently offer pads specifically designed for use as cymbals. We tested the kit with another manufacturer's pads, and they worked fine with the 0.0.

The 0.0's 250 internal sounds were sampled at the industry-accepted optimum 44.1 kHz. Some were recorded "dry," others have built-in effects and/or ambience. The samples consist of 33 kicks, 42 snares (including rimshots and cross-sticks), 6 toms, 15 hi-hat sounds (open, closed, and pedal), and 7 cymbals, plus lots of ethnic drums and percussion, melodic percussion and keyboards, brass hits, etc. There are also a handful of very hip velocity-sensitive loops and grooves that are a blast to jam with. The module's 64-voice polyphony ensures that it will never get bogged down, even with busy played patterns and/or MIDI'ed-in sequences.

Overall, the quality of the drum sounds was very good—bright, present, and alive. I was especially jazzed by a number of the ethnic sounds, some of which I haven't heard on any other module. A bit of "dirt" in a few of the bass drum samples becomes apparent before their gate closes, but this likely wouldn't be noticeable in a normal playing context. The hi-hat sounds are quite good, including the best half-open rock hi-hat sample I've heard. Their variety should cover all stylistic bases.

My only real gripe is the limited selection of ride cymbals and toms. The scant two rides consist of one bow and one bell sound. There are just six toms. Two of these are gated, and two are of the way-synthetic variety. This leaves just two basic, acoustic-sounding toms. This allocation seems a bit odd in light of the module's four cowbells, four whistles, *eleven* hand claps, and numerous wacky synth sound effects. While special effects and esoteric percussion are nice to have as "bonuses," if forced to choose, I'd probably rather have a couple of extra basic kit sounds.

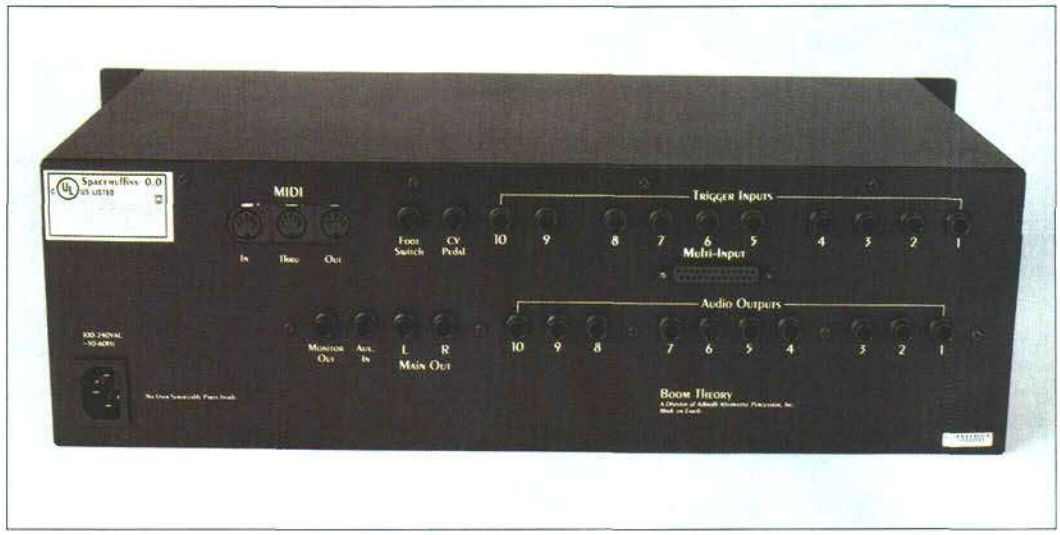
I realize that the 0.0's samples are intended as building blocks. Variations are created by cross-fading different sounds, or different versions of the same sound, but with slightly different tuning, decay times, or stereo placement. A little of this type of additive manipulation results in subtle sonic changes. A lot creates "effecty" hybrids that are interesting, but not really natural or acoustic-sounding.

As you read these concerns about Boom Theory's choice of sounds, remember that sample usability depends a lot on the individual user's musical goals and needs. Some drummers, particularly those who want to break from tradition a bit, might dig the 0.0's sound palette just as it is. Also, at press time, Boom Theory was designing another 0.0 sound card with totally different samples, as well as a separate module dedicated exclusively to cymbal sounds.

How Do You Think He Does It?

The 0.0 is three rack spaces high, making it larger than any other sound module on the market. But the rack-ready design is one of several amenities that suggest this baby is aimed at serious gigging professionals. The most obvious of these features are the ten mono inputs and *ten* mono outputs. They are all standard 1/4" jacks. Typically, recording engineers want to be able to print each drum to a separate track. This affords them independent control over volume, EQ, and outboard effects after the basic tracks are recorded. The 0.0's individual outs (which bypass the internal volume, treble, and bass circuitry) facilitate this.

The pair of mono outputs (left and right) are more appropriate for live performance. An independent mono monitor output is great for routing a separate drum mix to your band's—or your own—monitor. The front panel-mounted headphone jack carries the same signal, but in stereo. A stereo auxiliary input, ideal for audio sources such as tapes, CDs, or a click track, is fed through the monitor and headphone mixes, but not the mains or individual outs. Very smart, very practical. Alternatively, the auxiliary circuit can be used to route a signal to and back from an outboard effects processor. The 0.0 has no internal effects (other than those that are "built-in" to some of the sampled sounds).



A DB25 jack accommodates the multi-conductor "snake" that is part of Boom Theory's optional integrated rack system. Jacks for a footswitch, expression pedal, and MIDI in, out, and through complete the 0.0's exceptionally versatile connectivity.

Two velocity modes determine how a sound responds to multiple hits on the same pad. In Multi Mode each sound is allowed to "ring through" to its preset decay time. In Single Mode, each sound is cut off by subsequent hits on the same pad. This mode is recommended for restarting a loop with each hit.

Each of the 0.0's ten inputs can be set to one of four trigger modes: Normal, Roll, Random, and Hi-Hat. Normal mode is for standard single sounds, as well as layered sounds. Roll mode alternates through up to eight sounds. Random mode progresses through the sounds in (you guessed it) random order. Hi-Hat mode has a couple of different uses. The most obvious is to access up to three different sounds, depending on the position of a footswitch. Typically, this could be a pedal hi-hat (when the footswitch is depressed), closed hi-hat (when a pad is struck while the footswitch is depressed), and open hi-hat (when a pad is struck while the footswitch is not depressed). Boom Theory recently made a software change that adds a continuous controller. This feature is commonly used to access different hi-hat samples, thus simulating different degrees of openness. For my own playing preferences, this was a really wise decision.

Naturally, Hi-Hat mode is not restricted to hi-hat sounds. Other groups of three sounds can be assigned and controlled to creative, even wild effect. This mode can also be used to change drumsets.

Controllable parameters for each trigger include instrument type, gate time, note value (pitch), volume, pan, velocity curve, and sustain, plus the degree to which pitch, volume, or hi-hat "closure" are affected by an expression pedal. It's important to note that these parameters can be adjusted for *each of up to eight parts per trigger.* Theoretically (by Boom Theory's calculation, not mine), this creates $3x10^{14}$ possible combinations! Similarly, each part can be independently mapped to different MIDI channels, potentially accessing different sound modules.

Naturally, all of this data can be saved. The 0.0 stores ten preset kits and up to fifty-four user-defined kits. A footswitch can be used to advance through patches or send MIDI program changes. (Note that neither the footswitch nor the controller pedal are included.)

Another cool thing about the 0.0 is that it's upgradable and expandable. Planned user-installable expansion boards will have additional sampled loops and sounds. Thank you, Boom Theory!

There Has To Be A Twist

Button pushing: the bane of newly electronicized drummers. Although the 0.0 sound module employs a few buttons, the majority of editing is achieved by twisting knobs. Knobs are generally considered faster to use and easier to reference visually. Especially convenient are knobs for trigger gain, volume, bass, and treble for each of the ten channels. Anyone who's had to start pushing buttons and plumbing the innards of a drum module in the middle of a set—or *song*—to do some basic tweaking will appreciate this convenience.

More complex editing is, well, more complex. The 0.0's programming structure is logical and dead-simple to learn. But its sound-layering capabilities are so deep (eight-"parts" deep, to be specific), the temptation for spending your youth programming the universe's phattest kits is huge.

I found building multi-part sounds on the 0.0 to be a bit awkward. Each edit screen shows four parameters that correspond with four knobs. A larger selection knob below these edit knobs advances through to other screens, where the edit knobs control different sets of four parameters. Strangely, while the part parameter is on the first screen, the sound parameter is on the second. This results in a fair amount of jockeying to and fro to assign and adjust the components of a multi-part sound. This process would be easier if the sound and part parameters were on the same screen. Better still would be a button or knob that would scroll through the various parts while remaining on the same sound or sound-edit parameter.

Programming some multi-part sounds also gets a bit sticky because the 0.0 doesn't facilitate bouncing back and forth between the individual sound being "auditioned" and the stack with that sound included. This isn't a problem if you're layering very different sounds, such as a snare drum and a crash cymbal, or even a low timbale and a high timbale. These sounds and their contribution to the stack are fairly predictable. But for sounds with more subtle timbral differences—for example, two or more snare drums—it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish the sound you're adding from the ones that are already in the stack. This is why it would be helpful to be able to hear the "solo" and "ensemble" sounds in close succession. On the bright side, this problem would diminish over time as you become familiar enough with the individual sounds to be able to anticipate the effect they'll have upon the stack.

Taking the driver's seat behind a set of Space Muffins feels nothing like sitting at a typical pad kit.

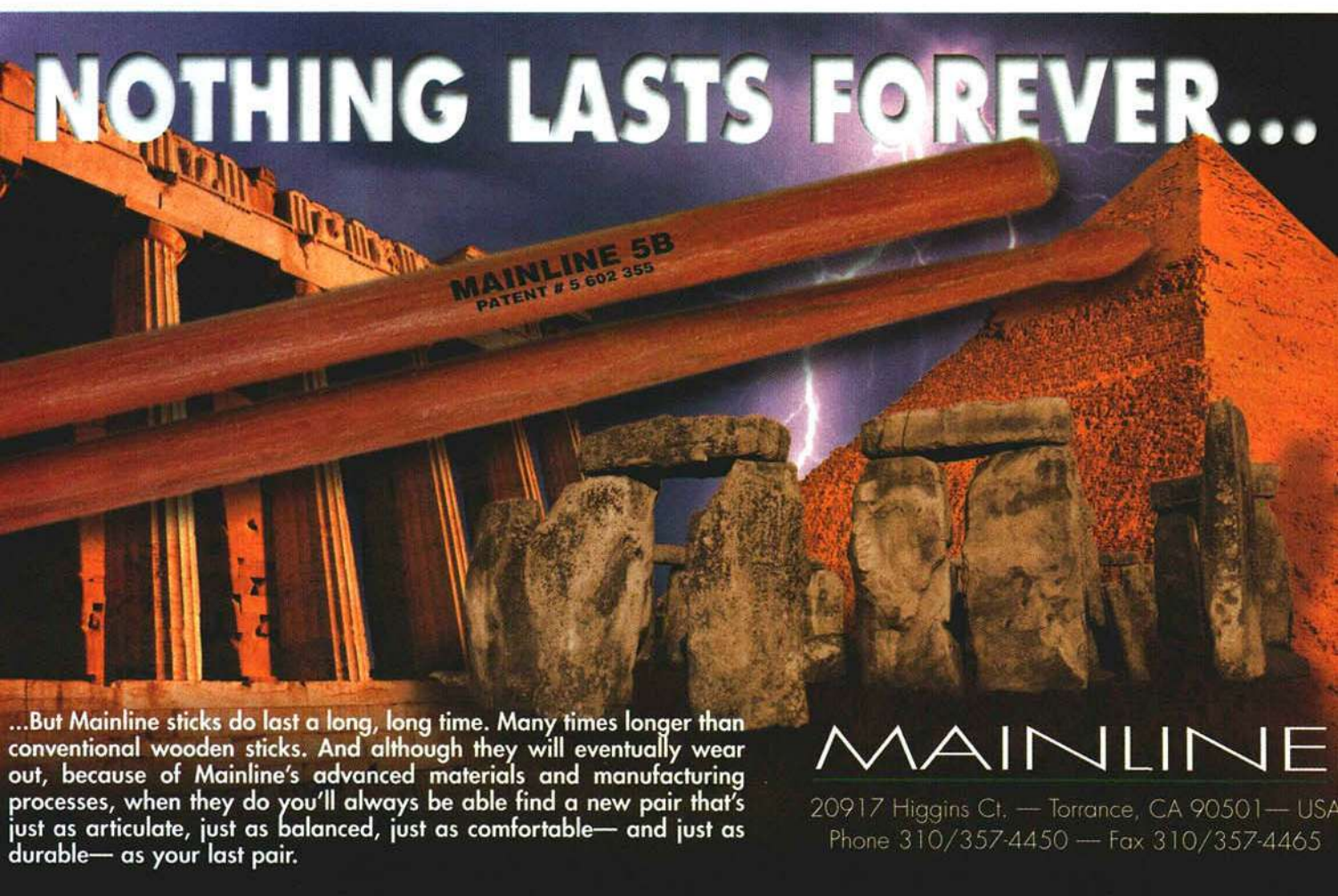
Conclusion

If you've avoided electronics solely because you think they look weird, wait no longer. Space Muffins look great. Space Muffins also *feel* great—and outstandingly real.

The 0.0 lacks some of the bells & whistles found in other modules. The focus here is on excellent performance in the fundamentals: triggering speed, dynamic range, and freedom from unwanted pad interaction. Also, it has a few unique tricks of its own—notably ten individual ins and outs, and basic mixing buses for each—that are eminently practical for the everyday gigging musician. Could it be easier to use? Yes. But for drummers who are looking beyond conventional setups and orchestration, the 0.0's capabilities are vast. To see what I mean, run the module's internal demo. For the adventurous drummer/percussionist, you'd be a madman *not* to check it out.

Muffin Recipe

Kit Reviewed:	Bop Deluxe
Configuration:	14x18 bass drum, 3½x13 dual-zone piccolo snare, 8x8 and 8x10 toms, 14x14 floor tom
Finish:	Kermit Green wrap and Hunter Green powder-coated lugs
Sound Module:	0.0
Pricing:	$3,995, includes five-piece kit with sound module, Ax mount, floor tom legs, bass drum pedestal, and cables. Does not include any pedals or stands.
Warranty:	1 year



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During the great U.S. land and population expansion of the late 1800's, millions of these trees were harvested to supply the lumber to build the great cities of the United States. Every one of the lumberjacks who worked the forests during that time was given a registered sawyer's mark that he used to identify his trees and the year each was felled.

Once cut, the logs were marked and taken to the closest body of water where they would be floated to nearby sawmills and processed into lumber. Many of these logs ended up on Lake Superior and while most made their journey to the mills without incident, thousands became water-logged and sank to the bottom of the lake. There they rested peacefully for the next hundred years.

Recently this underwater forest was accidentally discovered by divers searching for treasure from sunken ships. As they raised the logs to clear their view, they found the real treasure was this perfectly preserved "slow growth" wood with incredible figuring (flame, birdseye, quilt) and a significantly greater density (5-6 times the growth rings per inch) than any of today's premium hardwoods could provide.

As a few independent collector's and custom instrument makers began investigating the musical properties of the "Lake Superior" wood, it quickly became apparent that not only had the icy-cold temperature and low oxygen content of the lake's deep water made time stand still by stopping aging and preventing deterioration, the long submersion had also given the wood a noticeably more resonant, more musical sound by washing out the tree sap, minerals and other organic materials.

Through an exclusive agreement with the Lake Superior Water-Logged Lumber Company and with the assistance of master drum-builder Johnny Craviotto, a handful of Lake Superior's Maple logs were acquired by Drum Workshop just before the end of the 20th Century. Using hand-selected inner, center and outer plies that were chosen for their specific sound qualities, DW succeeded in creating a "Lake Superior" drumset with the same proven shell/reinforcing hoop structure and proprietary shell production and TimbreMatch® shell selection processes as their legendary Collector's Series.

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Today, Drum Workshop proudly announces the introduction of perhaps the most rare and spectacular set of drums ever produced: the DW Limited Edition "Timeless Timber" Drumset. From their beautiful appearance to their distinctive tonal character, the superior qualities of DW's "Timeless Timber" drums are truly unparalleled in the history of drumming. These drums along with the equally classic DW Collector's and Workshop Series custom drums can be seen and heard only at your local authorized Drum Workshop dealer and only for a limited time.

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Due to the rarity and limited availability of Lake Superior Maple, only 100 of DW's "Timeless Timber" drumsets will be produced— each featuring a hand-rubbed, vintage sunburst lacquer finish, special satin nickel-plated hardware and a certificate of authenticity stating the kit's approximate "birth" and harvest dates, age and sequential serial number. "Timeless Timber" kits will include a 5X14" snare drum, 18X22" bass drum and 7X8", 8X10", 9X12", 11X14" and 13X16" tom-toms.

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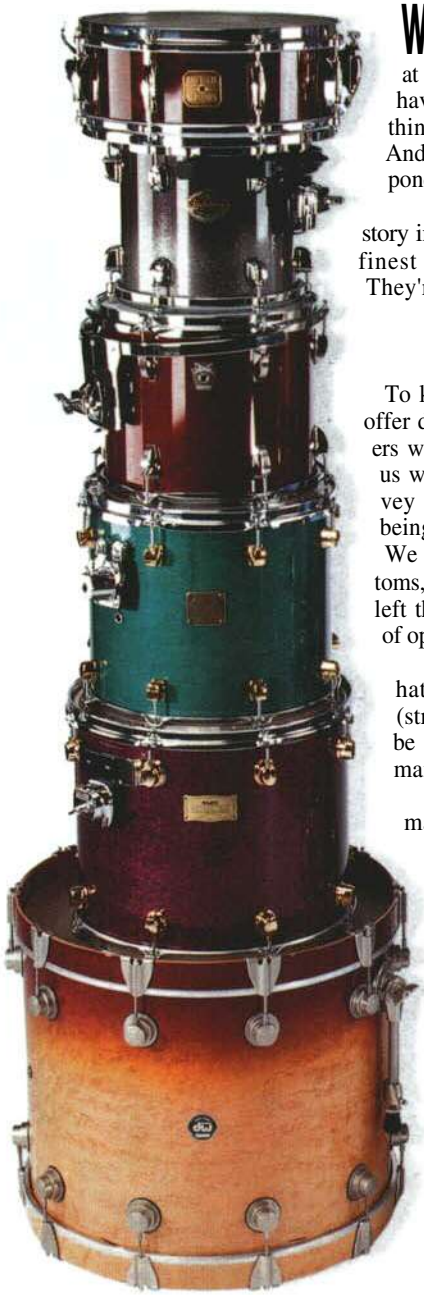
Drumkits To Dream Of

An MD Special Report

photos by Jim Esposito



We've all been there: Standing in front of a drumshop window, gazing longingly at a beautiful drumkit on display. It might have been thirty years ago, or it might have been yesterday. The point is, drummers love to look at drums. We love to think about drums. Heck, we even love to *dream* about drums.

And if you're going to dream, why not dream *big?* How about more than one kit to ponder? How about two...or four...or even more?

Well, *MD* is here to please. In only the second equipment-related cover story in our history, we present for your viewing pleasure no less than *twelve* of today's finest drumkits—kits that offer the ultimate in sound, looks, and performance. They're all lined up and ready for you to ogle. (Just try not to drool, okay?)

What This Survey Is

To keep our survey group to a manageable size, we decided to focus on brands that offer drums *and* hardware. (Future *MD* features will examine the work of manufacturers who focus on drums alone.) We invited the manufacturers of those kits to provide us with examples of their best work. For the four *MD* editors who conducted this survey (Rick Van Horn, Bill Miller, Adam Budofsky, and Rich Watson), it was like being a kid in a candy store!

We stipulated only that each kit should include 10" and 12" rack toms, 14" and 16" floor toms, a 14" snare, and a 22" bass drum. We left the depths up to the manufacturers, according to their concept of optimum acoustic performance.

The hardware package was to include a snare stand, hi-hat, bass drum pedal, and three cymbal stands of some sort (straight, boom, or combination cymbal/tom). Floor toms could be on legs or suspended on stands—again according to what the manufacturer thought provided the best sound.

We left the appearance of the kits completely up to the manufacturers. They could give us a representative example of their production finishes, or go all-out with a custom creation. Again, we wanted their best!

What It Isn't

Drumkits at the high end of the market differ widely in construction, materials, and fundamental design concepts. For that reason, we decided *not* to make this feature a "shootout" or to try to rank the kits. (After all, how do you rank a Mercedes versus a Maserati versus a Rolls-Royce?) Instead, we decided to examine each kit on its own merits, and to report on its individual strengths and weaknesses. You can then take those reports and draw your own conclusions. The kits are listed in alphabetical order by company name.

Apples And Oranges

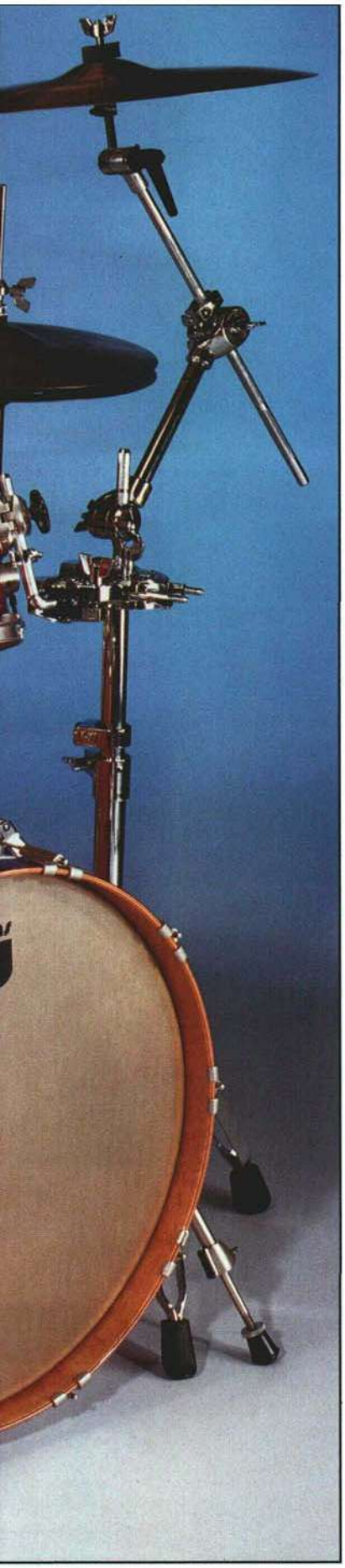
Some high-end kits are created from drums made in advance and available as stock items from their manufacturers. Such kits are also often available with hardware packages. Other kits are totally custom-created to the buyer's order, with hardware purchased a la carte. This accounts for some of the price differential between the kits we examined. Other influences on pricing include materials, engineering and construction details, custom finishes, and place of manufacture.

Beauty That's More Than Skin-Deep

With kits at this level, high-quality construction should be a given. And on all the kits we examined, it was. Bearing edges were true, shell seams were perfect, drums were in round, and finishes were consistent. All shell interiors and edges were smooth, and all bass drums were fitted with key rods instead of T-rods. Particularly outstanding construction elements will be noted in the individual drumkit commentaries.

Aesthetics are another matter. It's rare that a given finish or hardware design appeals to every drummer who sees it. However, there were several occasions when all four of the *MD* editors *loved* the look of a particular kit. Those occasions will be noted in the commentaries, too.

So now that we've set the stage, let's open the curtain. Here's a look at a dozen drumkits to dream of!



Drum Workshop Collector's Series

Configuration: 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 11x14 and 13x16 suspended floor toms, 5x14 snare drum
Note: All toms suspended using STM suspension system.

Shells: inner and outer plies of 600-year-old Lake Superior maple, core plies of 1,000-year-old Lake Superior maple; rack toms 6-ply with 3-ply reinforcing rings, floor toms and bass drum 7-ply with 3-ply reinforcing rings, snare drum 10-ply with 6-ply reinforcing rings

Finish: Light Tobacco Fade lacquer; satin nickel-plated rims & lugs

Rims: steel

Heads: DW Coated/Clear crimped-ring heads (made exclusively for DW by Remo) on tops of toms, clear heads on bottoms of toms, Ambassador batter on snare, Coated/Clear batter and Renaissance front head on bass drum

Hardware: 5500TD Delta II hi-hat, 9300 snare stand, (2) 9999 tom/cymbal stands, 9934 double tom stand with accessory cymbal arm, 5500AD Delta II bass drum pedal

Price: $9,473

Appearance: The Light Tobacco fade lacquer over natural maple shells creates the look of fine antique furniture. The satin nickel-plating on the lugs and rims is understated so as not to overpower the look of the shells. The sepia-toned Renaissance front head completes the look.

Sound: These drums came tuned and ready to play right out of the box. The toms sound bigger than their size would indicate. Their DW coated/clear batters and clear bottoms provide cutting initial attack followed by a full expansion of the drum sound—deep and powerful.

The bass drum has *lots* of resonance and power. It comes equipped with a DW pillow rather than with self-muffling heads. Use of the pillow takes the edge off the drum's ring without sacrificing power.

The snare drum sounds woody, with lots of body and a full range of overtones. It produces lots of ringy resonance, especially on rimshots.

Hardware: DW's hardware is very heavy-duty (and just very heavy). Combination-stand designs and optional pieces make the stands flexible and adaptable, and help keep floor space to a minimum. Stands feature memory locks with wing nuts instead of key rods, so you don't need to hold a key in your hand while adjusting a stand.

The double floor stand can go quite low, allowing top-mounting of suspended toms. Drums can be bottom-hung just as easily.

The Delta II bass drum pedal (reviewed in the Oct. '99 *MD)* is smooth, fast, quiet, and strong. It can be tailored for extra power via a removable weight system.

The hi-hat has a two-leg design with a collapsible pedal plate. The hi-hat clutch has a drumkey lock on the lower nut (so the top cymbal can't fall loose).

Special Features: Specially curved bass drum hoop claws conform to the hoop shape, and are lined with rubber to prevent marring the hoop. Memory locks are virtually everywhere on all stands. All lugs are foam-packed to eliminate any rattles. Micro-fine threads on tension rods allow ultra-fine tuning.

Other Comments: DW's quality control is illustrated by the fact that each drum on our survey kit was personally inspected and signed by company vice president John Good.

Gretsch Custom

Configuration:	16x22 bass drum, 9x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 suspended floor toms, 5x14 snare drum Note: All toms suspended using RIMS mounts.
Shells:	maple; 6-ply
Finish:	Walnut Lacquer (deep reddish stain); chrome rims & lugs
Rims:	die-cast
Heads:	Remo; Pinstripe batters and clear Ambassador bottom heads on toms, coated Ambassador batter on snare, Pinstripe batter on bass drum
Hardware:	GT4849 hi-hat stand, GT4987 short Deluxe snare stand, G9002Z double tom holder, GT9010 double tom stand, GT4850 cymbal stand, GT4852 boom cymbal stand, G4959 Speed Cam bass drum pedal
Price:	$7,853

Appearance: The Walnut stained finish is deep and rich—an excellent example of Gretsch's famous lacquer work. The kit looks traditional and very classy. Gretsch's squarish logo badges are fairly large and conspicuous, but they've been around for years and nobody seems to mind them.

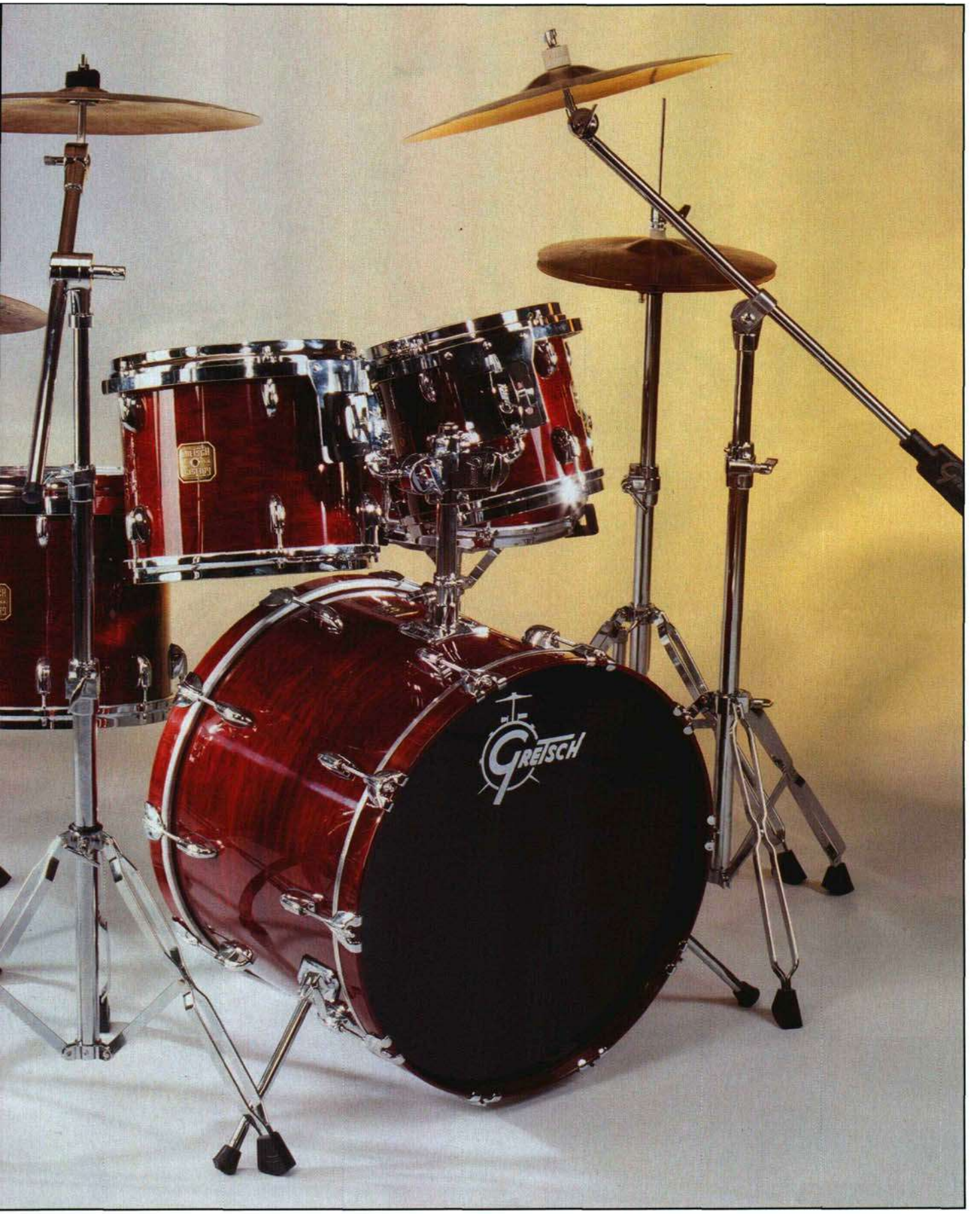
Sound: We were surprised to see the toms fitted with Pinstripe heads. They're not characteristic of the classic Gretsch jazz sound, which was achieved with single-ply coated heads. (But then, how many drum buyers today are looking for—or even remember—that sound?) With the Pinstripes the toms sound deep, punchy, and very appealing. One interesting aspect of the toms is that both the 10" and 12" are 5-lug, which provides a certain "rawness" to tuning. Perhaps this is an element of the "Great Gretsch Sound"?

The snare (with its white coated batter) sounds dry, warm, and powerful, and *does* have the classic Gretsch sound. The bass drum's combination of batter and front heads produces a nice compromise between boominess and control.

Hardware: At one time Gretsch's double tom mount seemed massive; by today's standards it's downright small. Its design is not state of the art, but it functions well enough. It does offer independent height adjustments for each tom, which is nice. Knurled L-arms provide less than optimal grip, even with the use of memory locks.

Special Features: Interiors of the shells all have the famous Gretsch silver coating, which is applied to promote reflectivity and increase resonance.

Other Comments: Overall, the stands and pedals we were supplied with are antiquated in design and performance. However, we understand that Gretsch is introducing a completely revamped line of hardware in February of 2000.


GRETSCH

LUDWIG®

Ludwig Classic Maple

Configuration:	16x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms with legs, 5x14 snare drum Note: Rack toms suspended using RIMS mounts.
Shells:	maple; 9-ply 6 mm
Finish:	Cherry Stain lacquer; chrome rims & lugs
Rims:	steel
Heads:	Ludwig; Weather Master single-ply coated batters and clear bottom heads on toms, coated batter on snare drum, clear Silver Dot batter and black logo head (with 6" hole) on bass drum
Hardware:	LM 817HH Modular hi-hat stand, LM822SSL low snare stand, LM826CS cymbal stand, (2) LM836MBS mini-boom cymbal stands, LM915FP Pro bass drum pedal
Price:	$4,146

Appearance: Ludwig's finishing work is highly underrated. Our test kit's Cherry Stain is a beautiful red finish, with exceptional depth. The historic Ludwig badges, lugs, and other fittings on the drums are diminutive and attractive.

Sound: The toms have a bright and lively sound, which is consistent throughout all sizes. This provides a nice "family" tone and timbre. The Ludwig Weather Master coated heads respond best when struck forcefully, bringing out the punchy tonality of the drums.

The snare drum has a classic Ludwig wood-snare sound: very woody and throaty. Not as cutting as some, but with rich tonality and lots of character.

The bass drum suffers from its head selection. A clear Ludwig Silver Dot batter with a felt strip simply does not provide a contemporary sound, especially in combination with a hole in the front head. The head produces a punchy *whack,* but robs the drum of low end. When we substituted a clear two-ply head the drum's depth was increased dramatically, and we enjoyed the overall balance it shared with the rest of the kit. The bass drum would provide even more resonance and bottom if equipped with a solid front head.

Hardware: Ludwig's stand designs are simple and somewhat dated—especially the non-disappearing cymbal boom stands. But they're completely functional. They're also relatively light, due to single-braced legs. (These stands win the portability award for our survey.) Their wide stance offers plenty of stability despite their light weight.

The bass drum pedal is functional if not particularly sophisticated. However, the design of the hoop clamp makes the pedal difficult to install or remove.

Special Features: Ludwig's double tom mount is the smallest in our survey. But its design includes 360° ball & socket arms for easy drum positioning and the ability to tune bottom heads while the drums are on the stands. It's an uncomplicated design that works well and takes very little space.

Other Comments: The visual appeal of the kit is somewhat marred by the universal tom-mounting brackets on the RIMS mounts. They're much larger than necessary to fit Ludwig clamps, and they put a lot of metal in front of the shells of the rack toms.

Mapex Orion Classic Comfort Size

Configuration: 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 11x14 and 14x16 suspended floor toms, 5½ x14 Black Panther snare drum
Note: All toms suspended using I.T.S. (Isolated Tom-mounting System) suspension system.

Shells: maple; 6-ply, with a thin outer seventh ply of birds-eye maple

Finish: Transparent Violet stain over bird's-eye maple; chrome rims, brass lugs (except for black rims & lugs on snare drum)

Rims: steel on toms, die-cast on snare

Heads: Remo; clear Ambassador batters on tops and bottoms of toms, coated Ambassador batter on snare, Powerstroke 3s on batter and front of bass drum

Hardware: H950 hi-hat stand, S950 snare stand, (2) TS/960 tom/cymbal stands, TS950 double tom stand, P950 bass drum pedal

Price: $4,720

Appearance: Mapex's deep violet stain over the natural grain pattern of bird's-eye maple creates a swirling, hypnotic effect—without the need for an exotic paint job. Although everyone loved the appearance of the shells, the combination of brass, chrome, and black rims and lugs drew mixed reviews. One consistent hardware color might be more effective.

Sound: The toms sound full and resonant, with good articulation and projection and plenty of depth. This character is very consistent around the toms from top to bottom.

The bass drum has lots of punch, tone, and low end, but its head combination gives it a very controlled resonance. This is in high contrast to the more open, ringy sound of the toms.

The snare drum has plenty of attack and power, but also has good snare response for delicate playing. The drum sounds good over a fairly wide range, from a medium tuning for a fat sound to really cranked for a tighter, more cutting sound.

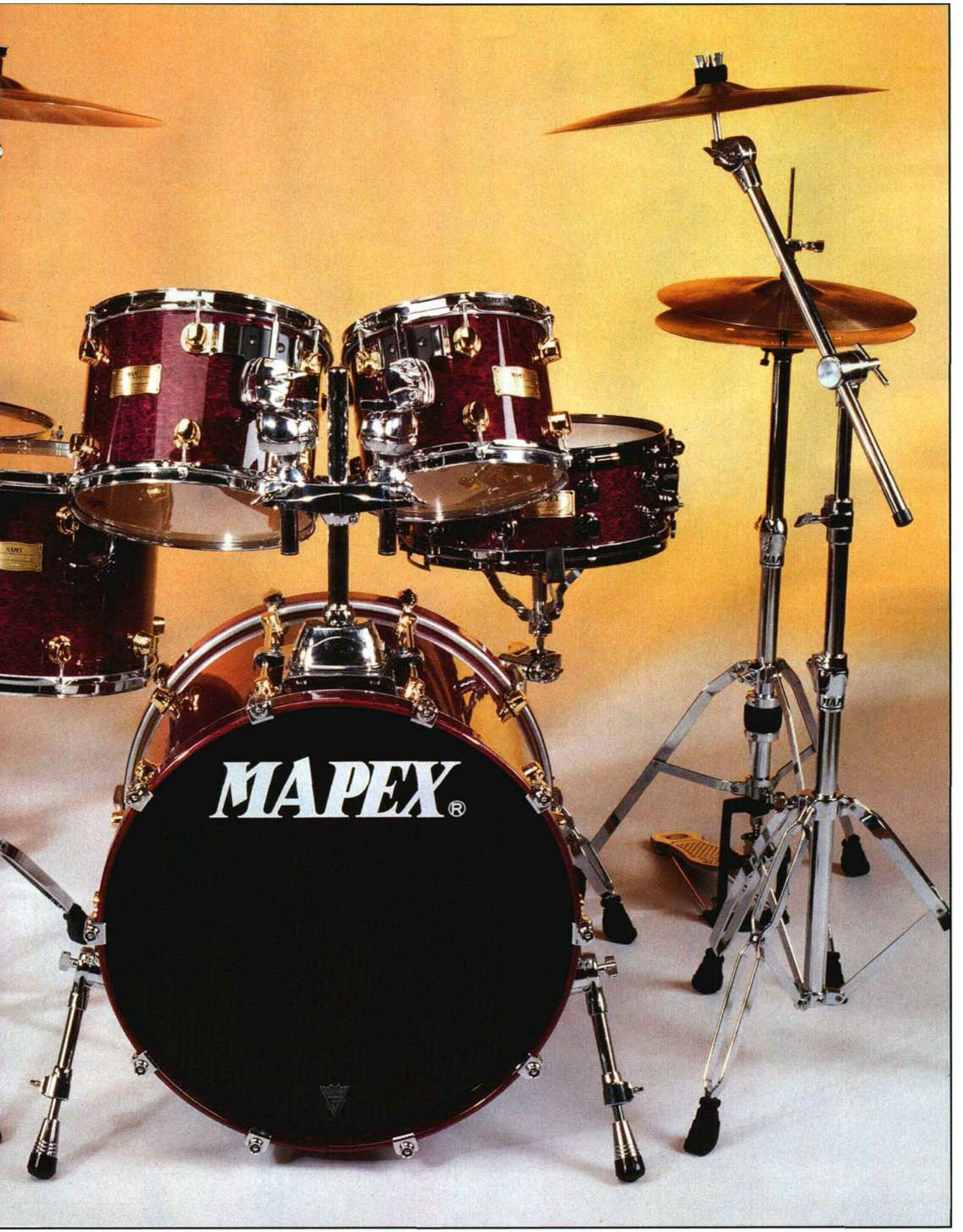
Hardware: The bass-drum spurs are mounted using the same I.T.S. system that suspends the toms, so the only metal parts attached directly to the drum are the lugs. The heads of the key-operated bass drum tension rods are recessed in the claws, so they won't snag on anything and won't lose their tuning.

The bass drum pedal is highly adjustable and easy to play. It features a three-surface (plastic, rubber, felt) beater that locks into position, with a safety catch to prevent beater slip-out.

Cymbal stands feature ball-and-socket cymbal tilters that offer excellent positioning potential. On the other hand, the hi-hat linkage seems complicated, involving a lot of mechanics. The spring tension is also quite high, even at the lowest setting.

Special Features: The TH685 tom mount can slide two inches front-to-back on the bass drum shell for better positioning.

Other Comments: All stands and mounts are well-designed and flexible, if a bit massive. Everything is easy to set up and adjust.


MAPEX®

Pearl
Masters

Pearl Masters Custom MRX

Configuration:	16x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms with legs, 5½ x14 snare drum Note: Rack toms suspended using Optimount suspension system
Shells:	maple; 6-ply
Finish:	Platinum Mist (pale platinum stain); chrome rims & lugs
Rims:	steel on toms, die-cast on snare
Heads:	Remo; clear Ambassador batters and bottom heads on toms, coated Ambassador batter on snare drum, clear Powerstroke 3 batter and black logo head on bass drum
Hardware:	H855 hi-hat stand, S985W snare stand, (3) B855W boom cymbal stands, P101 Power Shifter bass drum pedal, TH100 multi-directional tom holders
Price:	$5,347

Appearance: The Platinum Mist finish is a pale pearlescent wash over the natural maple shells. The kit's small, attractive lugs help to maximize shell exposure. The overall effect is subtle, classy, and *very* attractive up close. However, it appears a bit plain from a distance.

Sound: Pearl's toms and bass drums have a characteristic sound: focused and bright, with plenty of cut and projection. The tonality is mainly in the mid ranges. The bass drum especially seems to produce more punch and attack than booming low frequencies. These drums might have benefited from thicker heads to promote more low end.

The snare drum is crisp and clear, with good sensitivity and a solid, woody character. In keeping with the rest of the kit, it produces lots of attack and mid-range tonality.

Hardware: Pearl's twin tom posts are a time-tested design. However, their new TH100 tom arms rotate horizontally *and* vertically to provide universal positioning. This is a very nice feature that allows the toms to be moved without interfering with any accessory items clamped to the vertical shafts of the tom mounts.

The floor toms legs are fitted with unobtrusive and attractive memory locks, along with specially molded rubber feet designed to "isolate" the drum from the floor for added sustain.

The hi-hat and the snare stand have reversible rubber/spike feet. It makes sense on a hi-hat, which is prone to sliding problems. It seems a little overkill on a snare stand, though.

Special Features: All of Pearl's hardware is *very* easy to set up and position. Cymbal stands feature universal tilters for infinite adjustment. Power Shifter pedal is fast, strong, and instantly adjustable.

Other Comments: The massive Optimount tom-mounting system, which spans the lugs on rack toms, hides much of the toms'finish.

Peavey Radial Pro 1000 5th Anniversary

Configuration: 18x22 bass drum, 9x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 15x16 suspended floor toms, 6x14 snare drum
Note: All toms suspended using RIMS mounts.

Shells: maple; toms 3-ply, .0999" thick with cross-laminated hard maple bridges, bass drum 5-ply, .166" thick with bridges, snare .5" thick at bearing edges, 1.75" thick in center, machined from a solid block

Finish: Harlequin (blue/purple/gold iridescent lacquer), chrome rims, no lugs

Rims: steel

Heads: Aquarian; Classic Clear top and bottom heads on toms, Classic Coated snare batter, Super Kick II on batter and Regulator on front of bass drum

Hardware: HHS 500 hi-hat stand, SDS 500 snare stand, (2) HPS 500 tom/cymbal stands with BCA 500 boom cymbal arms and TA 500 tom arms, LPS double-tom stand with two TA 500 tom arms and one BCA 500 boom cymbal arm, BDP 500 bass drum pedal

Price: $4,727

Appearance: The kit's striking iridescent finish changes with every lighting angle. The absence of lugs on the shells makes for lots of unbroken surface on which the finish is displayed. The effect is very dramatic and theatrical without being "glitzy."

Sound: *Impressive* is the word. The toms are full, responsive, and powerful. The snare has incredible volume and cutting attack. And the bass drum has lots of depth and punch, and a sense of sheer "bigness" that was genuinely stunning.

The single-ply heads on the toms promote attack, but also produce a bit of "boinginess." Twin-ply heads would likely moderate this effect, while really pulling out the depth.

Hardware: The stands and hardware are generally functional if unremarkable. The tom arms are old-fashioned Yamaha-style "capped" ball-and-socket mounts, but with Pearl-style tubular arms. They work fine for the rack toms, but can't be inverted in the double tom stand to allow bottom-hanging of the suspended floor toms. However, the vertical shaft of that stand can be lowered through the releasable leg connection, allowing the drums to go quite low even when top-mounted.

The bass drum pedal is playable but not high-tech. It has "play" in the footboard hinge that isn't in keeping with high-end quality.

Special Features: Peavey's drums feature the most radical design in our survey. Radial bridges (made of thick wood) on the toms and bass drum receive the tension rods. Thus there are no lugs on the shells. Each actual shell is very thin for added resonance. Bearing edges of 45° are cut to the inside only; there is no countercut.

Snare design is the reverse of toms and bass drums. The drumhead fits over a thinner section, while the shell area between the heads is *very* thick. This part of the shell receives the tension rods, so again there are no lugs.

Other Comments: The drums are fairly heavy, and their Radial Bridge design makes them appear massive. The design also affects how closely together drums can be placed.

Complete throw-offs on each side of the snare add to the already substantial width of the drum. A tension adjustment on each side is nice (though not essential), but could be achieved with a smaller tension knob opposite a single throw-off.

The kit's visual attractiveness is marred somewhat by large 5th Anniversary logo badges featuring a huge "5." Peavey: How about breaking from the norm even more? Let the unique shape of your drums be your logo, and do away with badges altogether!

PEAVEY

Premier Genista

Configuration: 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms with legs, 5½ x 14 snare drum
Note: All toms are undersized; 6 mm smaller in real diameter than indicated size. Rack toms suspended using RIMS mounts.

Shells: birch; toms and snare 7-ply 5.5 mm, bass drum 7-ply 7 mm

Finish: Terraverdi Green lacquer; chrome rims & lugs

Rims: steel

Heads: Premier; CL Extra batters and CL response bottom heads on toms, Matched Play batter/resonant combination on bass drum

Hardware: 8015 hi-hat stand, 6013 snare stand, 6014 cymbal stand, (2) 6016 boom cymbal stands, 206 bass drum pedal

Price: $4,631

Appearance: Premier's dark green lacquer stain is deep and attractive. The Genista series' "domed" lugs are distinctive but not obtrusive. And the lugs and rims have absolutely the best chrome plating in the industry: gleaming and lustrous. The overall effect is stunning.

Sound: The defining acoustic characteristic of this kit is "control." The toms tend to emphasize the middle frequencies, with good attack but limited resonance and sustain. Premier's Matched Play heads on the bass drum stress punch and attack, but not a lot of sustain or tremendous depth.

The snare drum has a bright, crisp sound, but also has limited sustain. Using the thick plastic "doughnut" that comes with the drum kills *all* resonance.

This kit might benefit from different, possibly heavier drumheads on the toms to achieve more depth and resonance—especially for use in a live, unmiked environment. With the supplied heads, it seems well suited for situations involving miking, where clarity and control would be more desirable factors.

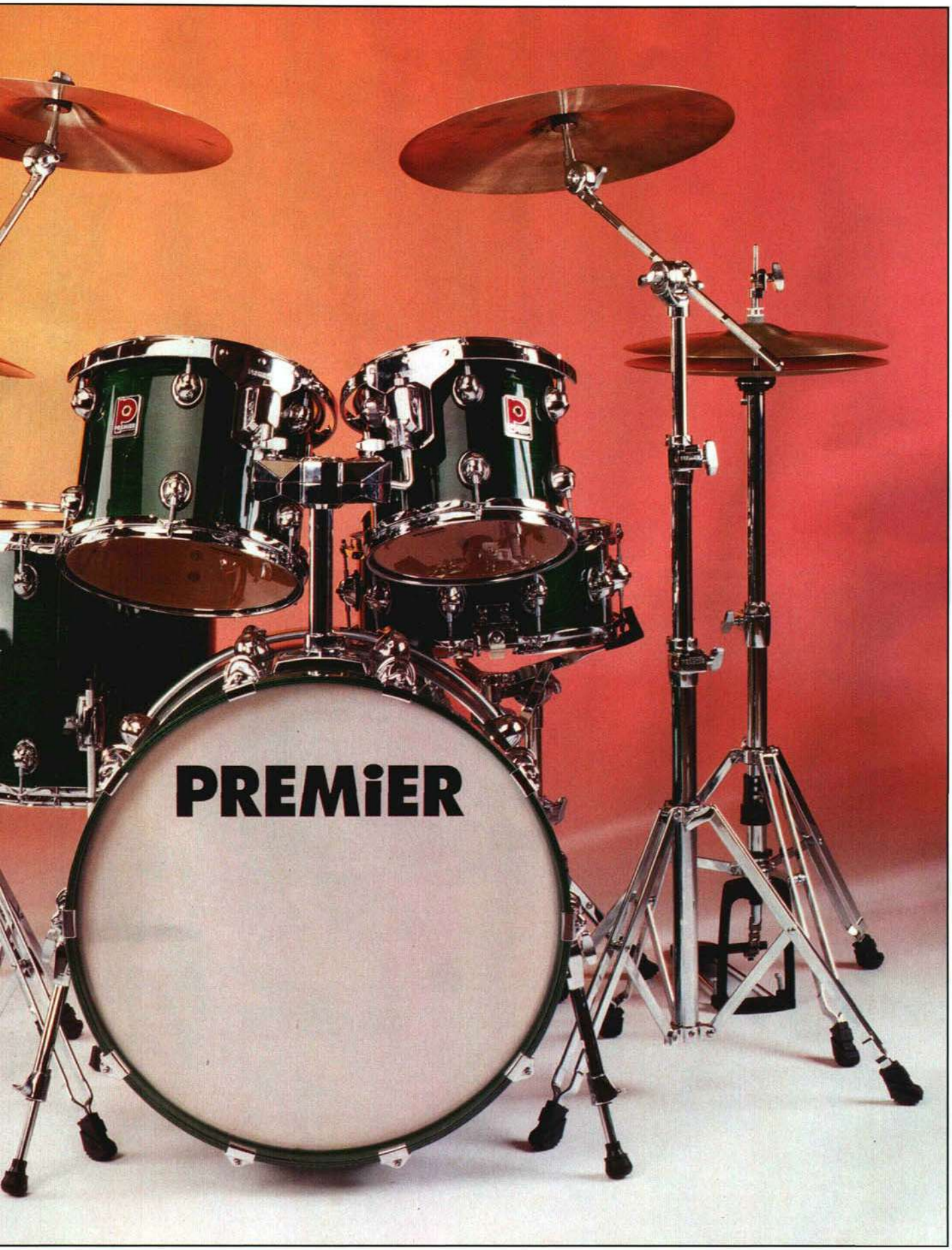
Hardware: The kit comes equipped with Premier's new 600 Series hardware. It features very streamlined, straight double-braced legs and art deco curved wing bolts. Lighter in weight than many double-braced stands, the 600s are nonetheless stable and very functional. The series includes nicely designed disappearing cymbal booms.

The bass drum pedal has a collapsible base plate for easy pack-up. It also features a side-adjusting hoop clamp—whose convenience is negated by the need for a drumkey to operate it.

Premier's double tom mount is a little big and blocky, but the mounting plate on the bass drum shell is actually quite small. The mount offers excellent positioning flexibility.

Special Features: The Genista is the only kit in our survey with birch shells. These shells are a major factor in the acoustic characteristics described above.

Other Comments: The toms proved hard to tune. However, since the drums had no construction flaws whatever, we attribute this problem to the Premier tom heads.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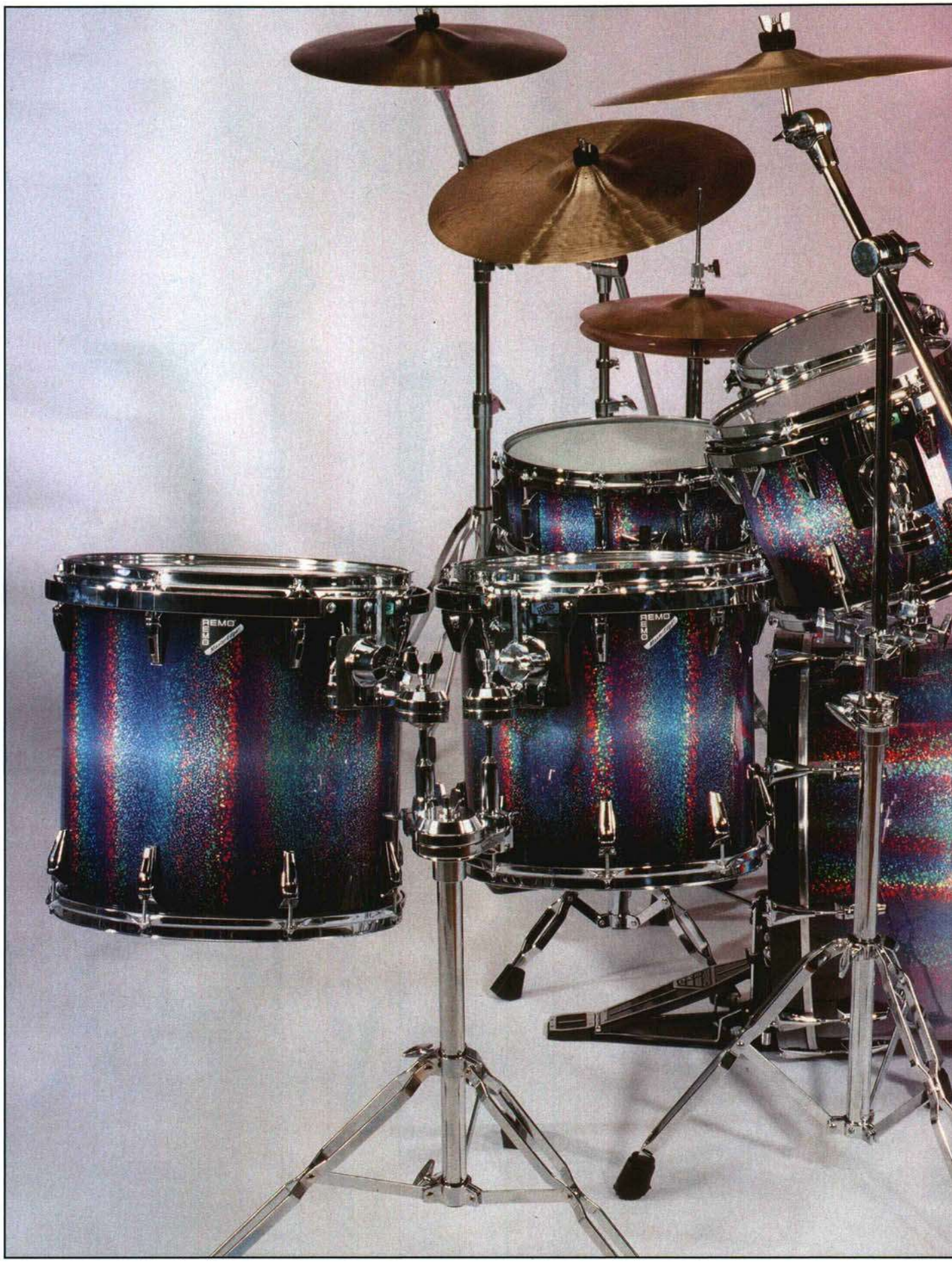
REMO
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Remo Master Edge

Configuration: 18x22 bass drum, 9x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 suspended floor toms, 5½ x14 snare drum
Note: All toms suspended using RIMS mounts.

Shells: Acousticon (resin-impregnated wood fiber), with molded bearing edges

Finish: multi-colored iridescent sparkle (original custom graphic); chrome rims & lugs

Rims: steel

Heads: Remo; clear Ambassadors on top and bottom of toms, coated Ambassador on snare batter, clear Powerstroke 3 batter and black Powerstroke 3 logo head on bass drum

Hardware: 360 Series hi-hat, snare stand, double tom stand, (3) cymbal boom stands, bass drum pedal

Price: $3,265

Appearance: The distinctive iridescent sparkle covering on this kit is a one-off demonstration of Remo's capability to create custom graphics. This particular finish proved very eye-catching, with sparkling colors that changed with every lighting angle. Admittedly an extremely "stage-y" look that won't appeal to everyone, it certainly makes a bold statement!

Sound: Remo's Acousticon shells are dense and reflective (and fairly heavy). So they promote sustain and resonance in toms and bass drums. The toms sound very big and deep, but they can also be tuned up effectively for a "jazzier" sound. So can the bass drum, although it is absolutely outstanding when tuned for a bottomy, powerful rock sound.

Remo's snare drums are unsung gems. The snare in this kit is extremely sensitive, crisp, and very powerful.

Hardware: Remo's stands are solid and functional, if not particularly innovative. Their non-disappearing cymbal booms are dated.

However, their bass drum pedal is surprisingly nice: easily adjustable and with a very good action. It also offers a beater with three vertical surfaces at different angles to accommodate different hoop depths. Better still, its hoop clamp tightens via a wing bolt above the top of the yoke, making it *very* easy to reach and operate.

Ball-and-socket tom mounts with hex L-arms permit flexible tom positioning and solid hold. The double tom stand can go fairly low, but still has some limitations. Individual tom arms can't be reversed in the stand for bottom-hanging.

Special Features: Remo is stressing their abilities in the field of custom graphics. They state that if you can put an image on a disk, they can put it on the drums.

Molded bearing edges on drums made them easy to tune.

Other Comments: The potential for a one-of-a-kind appearance, coupled with good sound and a surprisingly affordable price, make this kit a bargain.

Slingerland Studio King

Configuration:	16x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x 12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms with legs, 6½ x 14 snare drum Note: Rack toms suspended using RIMS mounts
Shells:	maple; 6-ply toms, 8-ply bass drum, 10-ply snare drum
Finish:	White marine pearl covering; chrome rims & lugs
Rims:	die-cast
Heads:	Remo; coated Ambassador batters on toms and snare, clear Ambassador on tom bottoms, coated Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter, smooth white Ambassador-weight front logo head
Hardware:	Magnamax MH8 111 hi-hat stand, MS9500 snare stand, (2) MX9560 tom/boom cymbal stands, MB7530 straight cymbal stand, MP 9450 bass drum pedal
Price:	$7,206

Appearance: Slingerland's white marine pearl covering looks classy and historic. Clean, simple lugs and nice, small "cloud" logo badges add to the effect. In addition, Slingerland's chrome plating is deep and sparkling on drums and stands alike. The long wedge-shaped design of the snare throw-off isn't state-of-the-art, but it's in keeping with the traditional look of the drums.

Sound: The toms have a warm, full sound—heavy on the low end, with less emphasis on attack. *Ambassador* batters provide plenty of articulation and clarity, but also offer a round, broad character. When tightened up a bit for a "jazz" tuning, they get livelier, but never sound thin. The bass drum sounds absolutely *huge,* with depth, power, and lots of resonance.

The snare drum's shell is thick enough to promote plenty of highs, but the shallow bearing edges keep the sound warm and full-bodied. Snare response is excellent.

Hardware: Ball-and-socket tom mounts feature knurled L-arms. They offer good positioning flexibility, but knurled arms provide less-than-optimal grip, even with the use of memory locks. The snare-stand basket is also adjusted by a ball-and-socket system.

The tom/cymbal stands feature short disappearing cymbal boom arms. Tilters are infinitely adjustable vertically and horizontally. Cymbal stands can go quite high, and have very stable tripods. They are also *very* heavy.

The Tempo King bass drum pedal appears a little clunky. But it's fairly quick and responsive, with a light action and plenty of power. It also has a side-adjusting hoop clamp, which is a nice touch.

Special Features: Slingerland drums are thinner and lighter than most comparable models. Their True Timbre bearing edge is less acute than that used by most companies, and the *outer* edge is rounded, which allows it to seat well into the collar of a drumhead. These factors contribute to the depth and warmth of the drum sound.

Stand tripods can be released at both the top *and* bottom points at which they connect to the stand's central shaft. Leg bracing can thus be folded up in different ways, which can help to "bridge" bass drum spurs, other stand legs, and pedals.

Other Comments: The classic look of the kit is marred by the solid-black bass drum hoops. The kit would be more attractive (and authentic-looking) with hoops fitted with pearl inlay strips.

Floor tom legs seem unnecessarily long. Their extra length just adds weight to a trap bag.

Slingerland

SONOR

Sonor Designer Maple Light

Configuration:	16x22 bass drum, 9x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 suspended floor toms, 5x14 snare drum Note: All toms suspended using Designer mounting system
Shells:	maple; 9-ply, 6.7 mm-thick toms and snare drum, 12-ply, 8.8 mm-thick bass drum
Finish:	Chameleon (gold/green/red iridescent lacquer); chrome rims & lugs
Rims:	steel
Heads:	Evans; clear Genista Gl batters and Resonant bottom heads on toms, coated Gl batter on snare, EQ series batter/resonant heads on bass drum
Hardware:	Designer series, including HS554 hi-hat stand, SS557 snare stand, (3) CBS552 boom cymbal stands, CAW56 removeable boom arm weight, TS555 double tom stand, DTH553 double tom holder, P9395 bass drum pedal
Price:	$9,428

Sound: The overall acoustic character of the kit is smooth, full, and powerful, with a consistent timbre between all the drums. The toms have a clear and contemporary sound, but can easily be tuned for a more sensitive "classic" tonality.

The bass drum is deep, powerful, fat, and open—but not overly ringy. It provides a very solid foundation, balanced with the timbre and tonality of the toms. Meanwhile, the snare drum has great response, a killer crack, and super sensitivity.

Appearance: Sonor's Chameleon finish—an iridescent combo of green, gold, and red—looks wonderful when hit with light from different angles. Without the lights it appears as a sort of metallic brown from any distance.

Hardware: Some would call it innovative, others would say overly complex. Sonor's hardware is original, mechanically intricate, and unique. Here's a quick list of pros and cons:

Pros: Rubber-sleeved knob-operated tension rods on the bass drum, swivelable bass drum beater (wood/felt), push-button bass drum spurs, slide-track tom mount with tiltable post, one laterally adjustable leg on each floor stand for flexible positioning, rubber handles instead of wing nuts on cymbal stands, quick-release lever on snare basket, hi-hat with collapsible base plate, removeable cymbal-boom counterweight

Cons: Hardware is heavy overall. The tom mount is massive and *tremendously* heavy, very complicated to set up, and physically awkward to work with. The double tom stand cannot go low enough to put the toms in a traditional flat "floor tom" position when top-mounted, and the individual tom arms cannot be reversed for "bottom" hanging. Cymbal stands are topped with threaded disks instead of wing nuts; these can easily roll away if they come off the stand.

Special Features: Tom-mounting system includes a dial by which the amount of pressure on the drum shell can be adjusted. This is intended to control the amount of sustain produced by the drum.

Other Comments: Our overall impression is that the Designer Series kit is at once the beneficiary and the victim of talented engineers who were allowed to run wild. Its sound is wonderful, and some of its unique hardware features are marvelously helpful. But others seem unnecessarily overdesigned without taking practical concerns like transport weight or handling convenience into consideration.

Tama Starclassic Maple

Configuration: 18x22 bass drum, 9x10 and 10x12 rack toms, 13x14 and 15x16 suspended floor toms, and 5½x14 snare drum
Note: All toms suspended using StarCast mounting system.

Shells: maple; 9-ply, snare and toms 5 mm thick, bass drum 7 mm thick, without Sound Focus Rings (reinforcement hoops)

Finish: Platinum Fade (gray-to-black lacquer with top coating that includes glass crystal powder); chrome rims & lugs

Rims: die-cast

Heads: Evans; clear Genista G1s on top and bottom of toms, coated G1 on snare batter, EQ3 batter/resonant head system on bass drum

Hardware: Iron Cobra Lever Glide hi-hat, HL80 Air-Ride snare stand, (2) Titan HTC87 tom/cymbal stands, Titan HC83B cymbal boom stand with detachable counterweight, Titan HTW89 double tom stand, Iron Cobra Power Glide bass drum pedal

Price: $6,280

Appearance: Tama's Platinum Fade finish is very artistic. It involves a painting process that includes powdered crystal in the top coat to catch and refract light. With its gray-to-black color scheme the finish is subtle in coloring, but dramatic in effect.

Sound: Everything about the sound of this kit is *big.* The deep-shelled toms create a fat, bottomy sound. The Starcast mounting system on all the toms helps them to produce long sustain and excellent projection. The Evans G1 heads contribute clear attack.

The bass drum is terrific—very deep and punchy. It has plenty of boom, controlled just enough by its Evans EQ3 heads.

The snare drum offers power, body, and a great crack. Die-cast hoops on this drum (as on all the toms) give the sound extra solidity—and make for terrific rimshots.

Hardware: Bass drum key rods are recessed below the hoops, making it easy to get the drum in or out of a bag. Small washers keep the rods from falling out of the claws when they're removed from the drum—a convenience during head-changing. The bass drum spurs have incremental position markings and a memory lock feature.

The Air-Ride snare stand holds the drum securely, and promotes resonance from the drum at the same time. Getting the drum on and off the stand is very quick and easy.

Although the double tom stand can't go quite as low as others for top-mounting configurations, the design lends itself to bottom-hanging. This allows good low "floor tom" positioning, and again makes getting the drums on and off very easy.

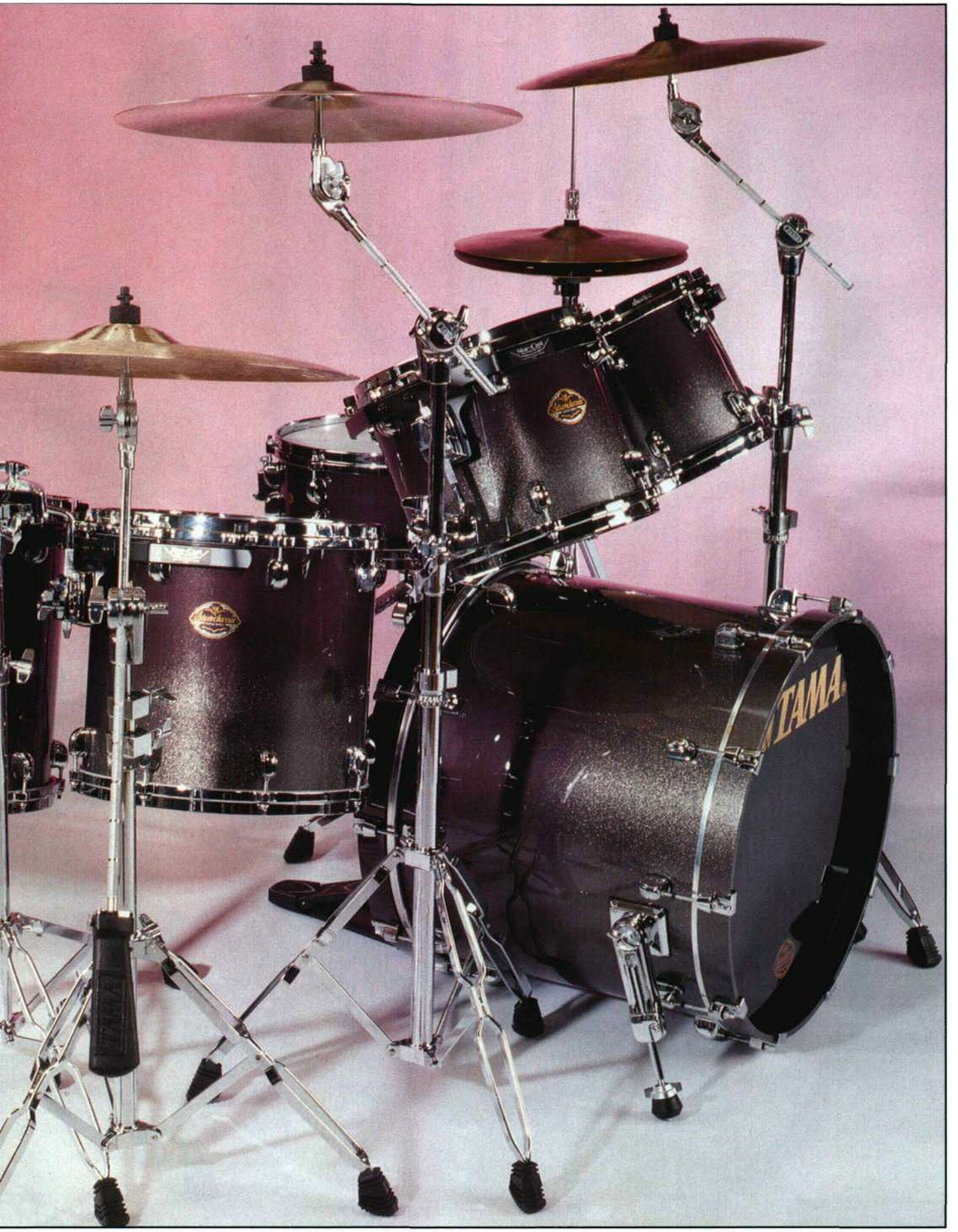
Combination tom/cymbal stands include disappearing mini-booms. The large boom cymbal stand has a snap-on/snap-off counterweight that can be released with the press of a thumbscrew for separate packup.

The Iron Cobra pedal features a variety of angle, tension, and stroke adjustments to achieve a tailored feel. It also features a convenient side-mounted hoop clamp.

The Iron Cobra hi-hat has a very well-engineered two-leg design, with a footboard base plate that provides the third "leg" but folds easily for packup. A metal shield protects the pedal linkage against damage during transport.

Special Features: The Iron Cobra pedal comes in its own molded plastic carrying case. This is a plus, since it's fairly complex and does not fold up for easy transport in a trap case.

Other Comments: Tama's attention to sound, practical design, and appearance seems very high. Although highly innovative and attractive, all hardware is designed from the point of view of *actual use,* focusing on convenience and functionality.


TAMA

YAMAHA

Yamaha Maple Custom

Configuration:	16x22 bass drum, 7 1/2x10 and 8x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 suspended floor toms, 5½ x 14 snare drum Note: All toms suspended using YESS system.
Shells:	maple; toms and snare drum 7-ply 7 mm, bass drum 10-ply 10 mm
Finish:	Turquoise Maple (turquoise/green stain); chrome rims, brass lugs
Rims:	steel on toms, die-cast on snare
Heads:	Remo; clear Ambassador batters and bottom heads on toms, coated Ambassador batter on snare, clear Ambassador batter and smooth white Ambassador logo head (with 6" hole) on bass drum
Hardware:	HS830A hi-hat stand, SS830 snare stand, CS835 straight/boom cymbal stands, WS945A double tom stand with CH735 boom cymbal holder, TH945A double tom holder, FP850 bass drum pedal
Price:	$5,725

Appearance: Turquoise stained finish is delicate rather than deep: a pastel blue-green allowing the natural wood grain to show through nicely. The combination of brass lugs and chrome rims drew mixed reviews. One consistent hardware color might be more effective.

Sound: This kit seems set up for a very live, jazzy sound, with its shallow-depth rack toms and its clear Ambassador batters on the toms and the bass drum. This impression is enhanced by the sound of the bass drum. Its 10-ply maple shell (which makes it surprisingly heavy, even with small, low-mass lugs) seems to promote more high-end sound, rather than depth.

Given this impression, we were surprised that the drum was shipped with a hole in the front bass drum head. This drastically reduces resonance, and makes the bass drum sound very "whacky." When we substituted a solid one-ply head for the Yamaha front head, the drum got right into character with the toms. It still wasn't very low, but it had plenty of roundness and a good jazzy boom.

Hardware: Yamaha is another company that keeps its focus on practicality and convenience. Its hardware is time-tested and high-quality. All stands offer positioning flexibility and stability. Yamaha was a pioneer in the design of disappearing straight/boom cymbal stands.

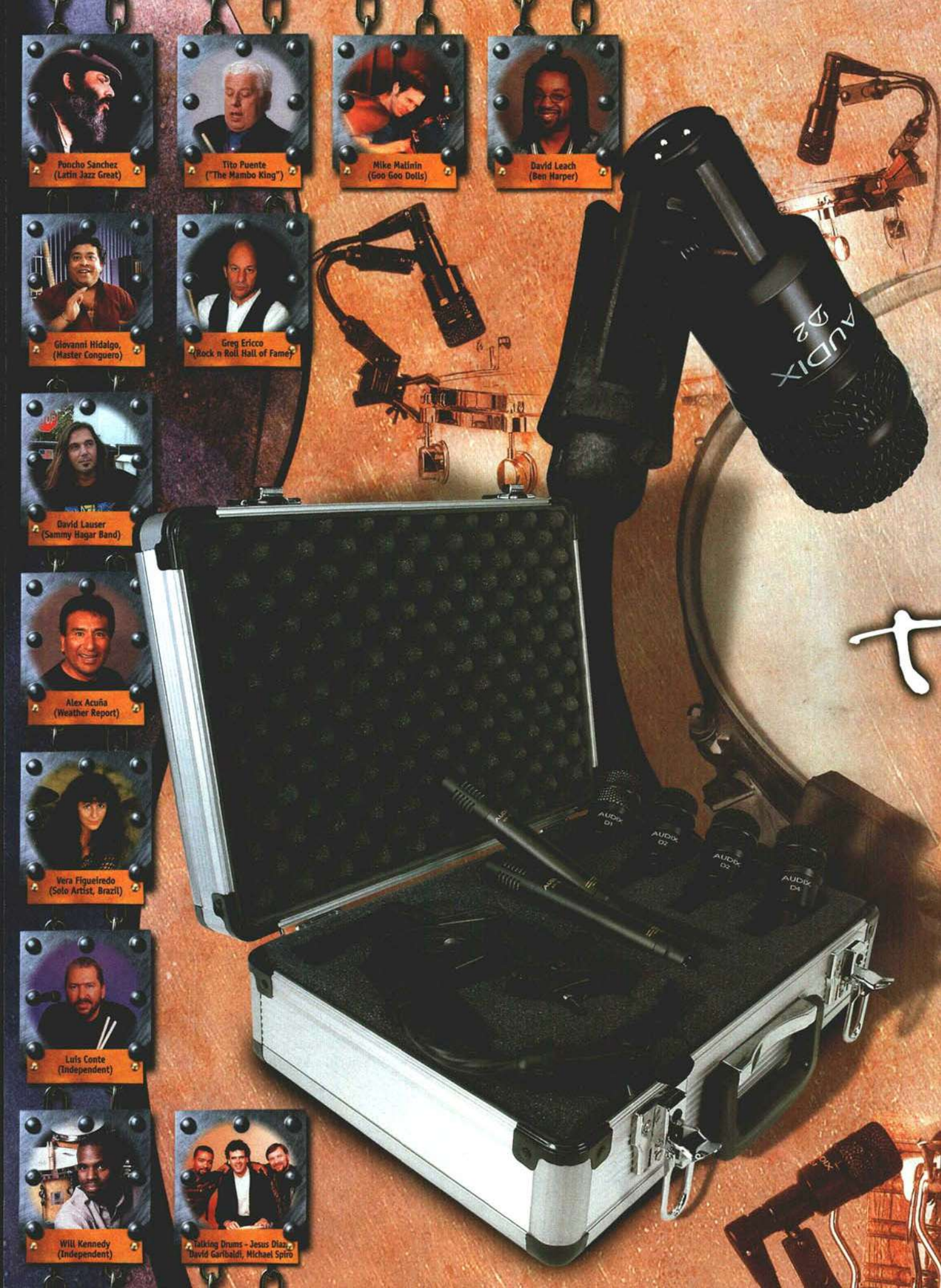
The double tom mount is not massive, but holds the drums well and provides excellent positioning flexibility. It's also very easy to get the drums on and off of.

The double tom stand can go *very* low, making it easy to position suspended "floor" toms in a low, flat configuration. The massive, double-braced legs of the 900 series make the stand heavy, but very stable.

The FP850 bass drum pedal has a smooth, quick action and is fun to play. However, the pedal requires a drumkey to operate the hoop clamp, which is inconvenient.

Special Features: Yamaha's tom-mounting system features ball-and-socket tom arms that can rotate a full 360° for easy drum positioning and the ability to tune bottom heads while the drums are on the stands.

Other Comments: Putting a hole in the front bass drum head reduces the drum's depth and resonance. As such, it seems out of touch with today's tuning for jazz *or* rock. We'd suggest supplying the drum with a solid head, and letting the player cut a hole should one be necessary.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David Leach
(Ben Harper)
Giovanni Hidalgo,
(Master Conguero)
Greg Ericco
(Rock n Roll Hall of Fame)
David Lauser
(Sammy Hagar Band)
Alex Acuña
(Weather Report)
Vera Figueiredo
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greg hutchinson

by Ken Micallef • photos by Alex Solca

Some drummers are born with a gift. Others are born with desire. Greg Hutchinson was born with both.

Whether stirring the soup with legendary bass master Ray Brown, swinging madly with tenor titan Joshua Redman, articulating the piano flurries of Eric Reed, or grooving hard with famed bassist Christian McBride, Greg Hutchinson always plays the right thing—like he was born to it.

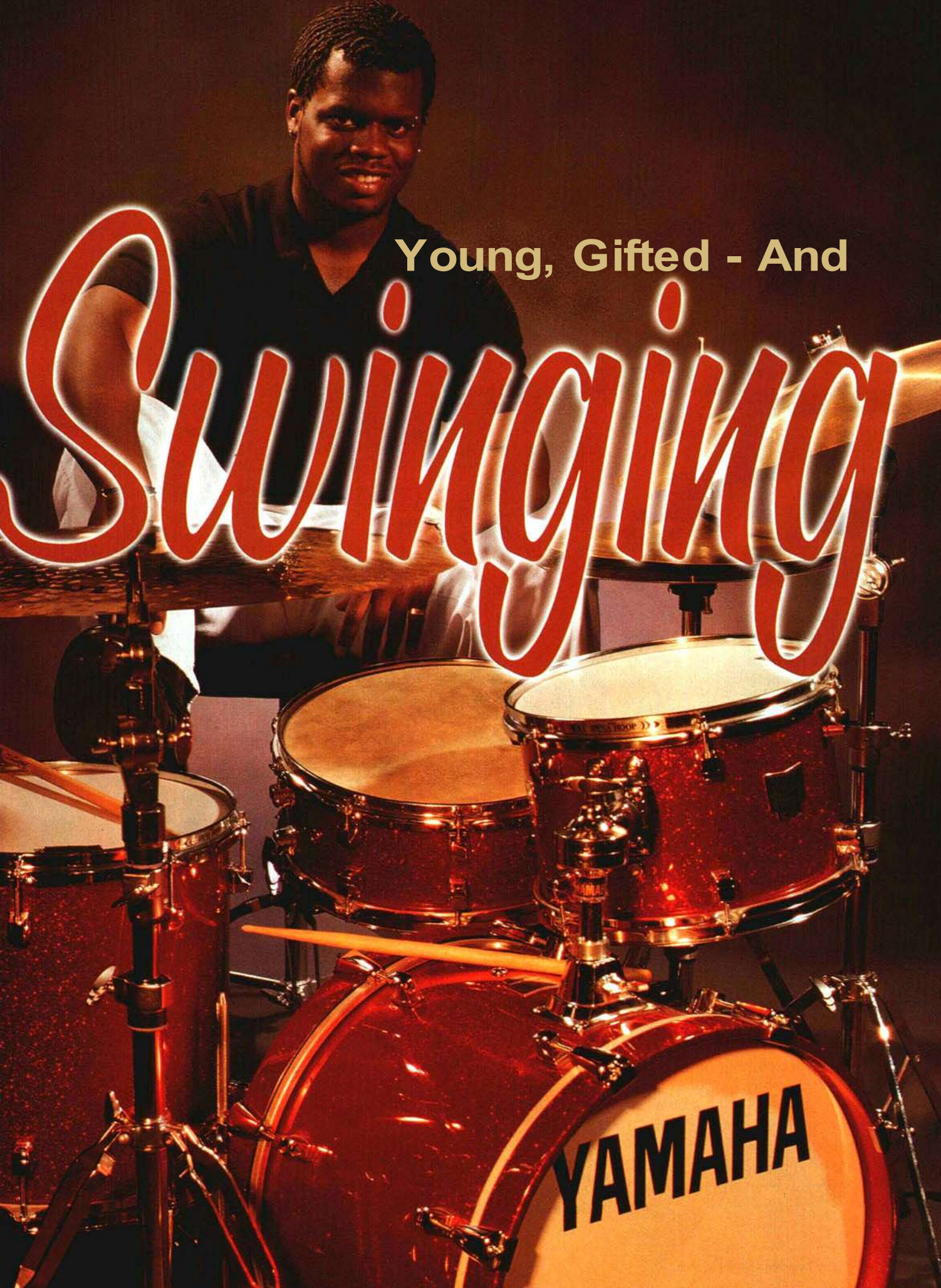
Understated to the max, Hutchinson follows in the drumming footsteps not only of his father, Melvin Hutchinson, but of his teachers, Kenny Washington and Marvin "Smitty" Smith. As those two drumming giants are in some ways polar opposites—Kenny, the stalwart swinger, Marvin, the swing expert who also loves fusion and funk—Hutchinson approaches every gig with a wealth of musical experience and a love for diverse musics.

Growing up in New York playing the Trinidadian music of his family, Hutchinson proved a natural at reggae, one-drop, calypso, and ska. This is a surprise when you see him play. There are no traces of backbeat bump in his swing playing. Hutchinson plays purely and entirely for the music. Like Washington, Greg's there to take care of business. Like Smitty, he imbues each gig with fluent musicality and energetic wit. Perhaps one of the best brush men on the planet, Hutchinson has the big, wide sound of Jo Jones and the unstoppable humor of Philly Joe Jones. Turn the other page, and Greg plays McBride's second-line and funk stylings with sheer grit.

gigs

- Joshua Redman
- Ray Brown
- Betty Carter
- Joe Henderson
- Roy Hargrove
- Christian McBride

While his recorded work is impressive, Greg Hutchinson must be heard live to be fully appreciated. Sure, Ray Brown's *Live At Scullers* showcases his swift brushwork, and Eric Reed's new *Manhattan Melodies* features his ingenious, rambunctious swing sticking. But when Joshua Redman next blows into your town, make it a point to be there. You'll witness Hutchinson's raw fire up close. It's the kind of fire that can rekindle a love of jazz or maybe the rebirth of a drummer's practice routine. But then, practice or not, some drummers are just born with it.


Young, Gifted - And
Swinging
YAMAHA

MD: Listening to the many recordings you've done, what stands out is that you play so many styles well and with authenticity. That's not the case with a lot of jazz drummers.

Greg: Listening is the key to doing all of that. And also, you can't help but be into all those styles, because that's what's happening now. *That* is today. You hear things on the radio or somewhere, and you try to do it.

One thing I've always felt is that jazz is the hardest style to play. It requires a whole different mindset. If you can play good time in jazz—a seriously good groove—and on top of that be able to improvise, then playing 2 and 4 is a simple thing. Of course, there are different ways of playing 2 and 4. You can play a very complicated thing or you can just lay it down. I'm asked to be creative every night playing jazz. I'm not saying that R&B is not creative, but it doesn't require as much in terms of what you're asked to do. Your *function* in R&B is to play a groove. But in jazz you have to also interact with the soloist. With someone like George Duke, for instance, you might improvise, but you're *still* playing 2 and 4.

MD: A rock drummer would say that usually when you hear a jazz drummer play funk or rock it doesn't really work.

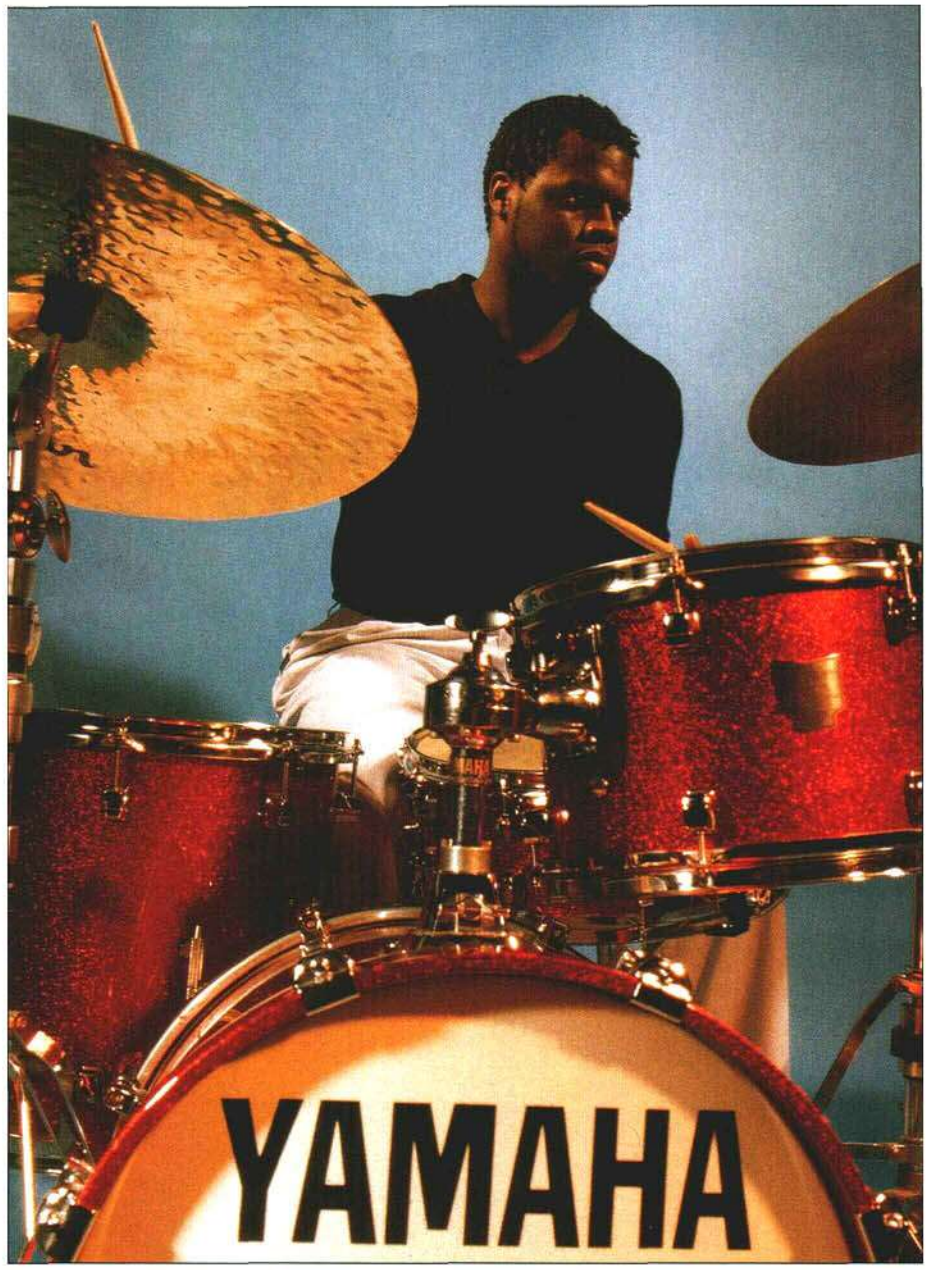
Greg: I agree.

MD: But that doesn't seem to be the case as much these days.

Greg: It's just the times. My father's side of the family is from Trinidad, so I came up listening to island music—reggae, soca, all of that. That's in my blood, something I just do. I played that one-drop stuff before I played jazz. Then my mom got me into jazz, so I went the opposite way. I already knew what having to groove meant. Then I just applied that to playing good time with a swing beat.

MD: On bassist Ray Brown's *Live At Scullers,* on the track "Estate," the groove is like a bossa nova, but it's not. It's an in-between groove, which can be very hard to play and hold.

Greg: First of all, look who I'm playing it with. With Ray, his time is so good I really don't have to work. He's got the time so strong that you just float on top of it. Of course you do have to have your own identity in terms of where the time is. But with Ray you just sit there and he lays it down for you.

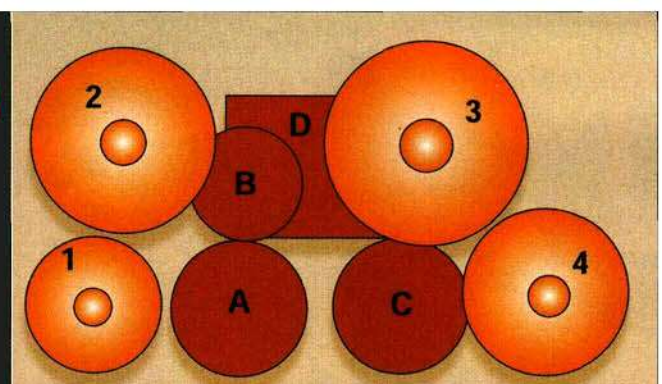


Hutchinson's Hoops

Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom ("I just started using their Vintage wood hoops on all the drums, which sound great for rimshots and really open up the tone.")
A. 5x14 wood snare
B. 8x12 tom
C. 14x14 floor tom
D. 14x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" "old K" hi-hats
2. 20" K Constantinople crash/ride
3. 22" K Constantinople ride (prototype)
4. 18" K Constantinople crash (uses occasionally)

Sticks: Zildian Jazz model with wood tip, Zildjian brushes
Percussion: Rhythm Tech Egg Shakers



MD: So you let him lead and drive things?

Greg: It's both of us. It's about give and take, and we played off of each other. When I first started working with him I followed a bit, but then he told me to go for it. He said, "grab it by the ass." By the time I left the band we were on a whole other level. I was with Ray for three years, and I did about eight records with him on Telarc.

MD: What did he want to hear from a drummer?

Greg: He would never say play this or play that. He would give me stories that would help me. He told me about when he and Art Blakey played in Billy Eckstine's big band. He said Art would play this thunderous solo and then stand up and at the end play this bass drum roll. He would get really excited, and the crowd would go crazy. Ray just wanted to relate the type of energy that was created.

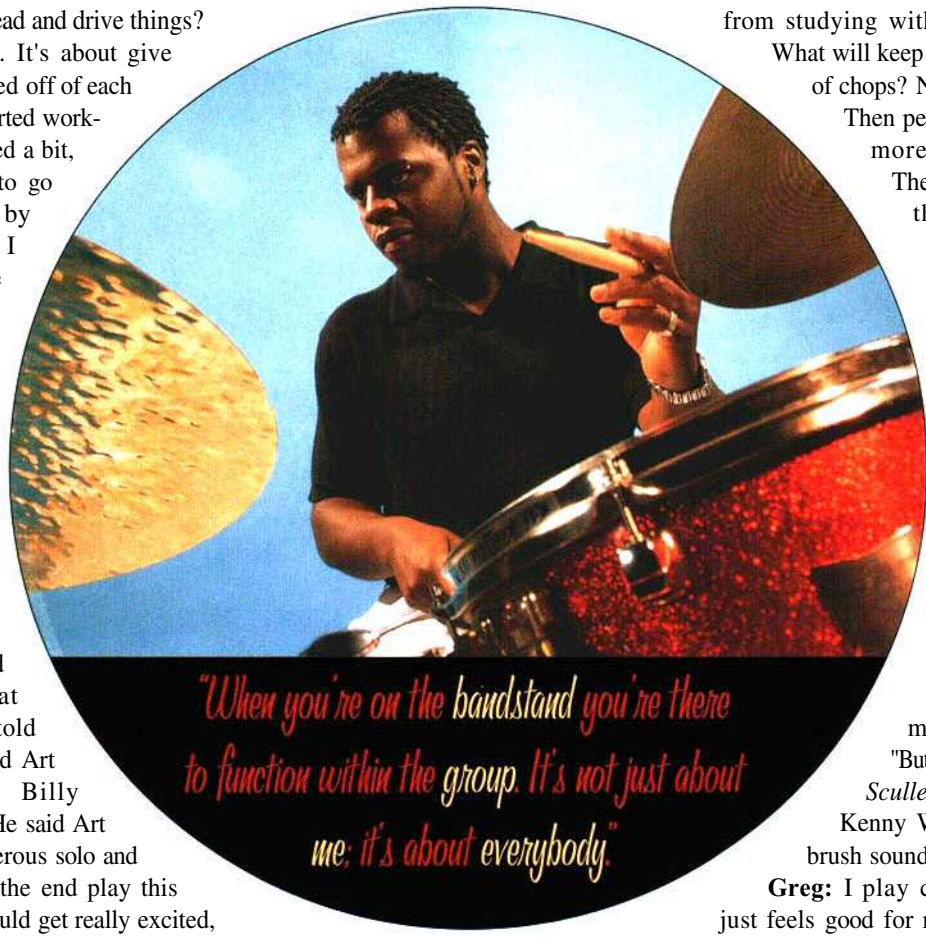
MD: Did he play things that made you learn or pay more attention?

Greg: Yes, he plays on top of the beat, which propels the music and keeps it going. I was used to that, but his "on top of the beat" is *really* on top of the beat. It's like an arrow pointing. I had to always be conscious of that when we were coming out of solos, to really step on it.

We were doing a clinic once and a drummer in the audience said to Ray, "You rush sometimes." Ray said, "Rush?" He told the guy to sit down at my kit and play some time. And when he did, Ray said, "That's boring." Then Ray and I played some time together, and Ray said, "Hear that? *That* is time. When you get that kind of a feeling come back and talk to me."

MD: Were you playing a fast tempo?

Greg: No, it was the same tempo. But Ray knew that I play a certain way. His point was that in this music there are times to lay back in the pocket, but there are also times when you also have to step on it, grab it, and take charge.



MD: What did you do that the other drummer didn't do?

Greg: It's all in the ride cymbal, how you play it and articulate it. That's the one thing that a lot of guys don't really have a handle on. There are guys who can play a lot of stuff, but their ride cymbal playing sucks. They're not swinging on it. You have to be able to swing on that cymbal alone before you do the rest of the drums.

When I teach I have the student play the cymbal alone. That was how I was taught. If you can groove on the cymbal, everything else falls into place.

MD: What is your conception for the ride cymbal?

Greg: I always tell guys who come to study, "Walk the dog." *[At this point Greg plays a ride cymbal pattern, saying in unison, "walk-the-dog, walk-the-dog, walk-the-dog."]* That gives you more to think about than ding-ding-da-ding.

MD: I noticed that even with all the styles you play, you never really try to draw attention to yourself. I think you underplay at times. You are meat 'n' potatoes.

Greg: That keeps me working. I got that from studying with Kenny Washington. What will keep you working? A bunch of chops? No. I like underplaying. Then people wonder if I can do more—drummers mainly. Then all of a sudden I hit them with the stuff, like on Christian McBride's album *[Family Affair].* People can't believe it's me. I think people will be surprised with the stuff I have coming out with Joshua Redman. We're playing in different meters.

MD: You've said that playing the brushes separates the men from the boys. On "But Not For Me" *[Live At Scullers]* you have that big Kenny Washington or Jo Jones brush sound.

Greg: I play counter-clockwise—it just feels good for me. I used to play forward, but I started working on the counter-clockwise motion in high school when I was studying with Kenny. I think it gets a bigger sound going that way. It just feels comfortable for me to go backwards. Besides, I'm backwards anyway.

MD: You're left-handed but play a right-handed setup. Does that affect your approach?

Greg: Yes. It makes it easier to play certain things that I hear and get them across. I feel I don't have to work as hard to get across what I'm trying to say. Maybe it's easier for me to phrase ideas. When I'm comping with my left hand, my body and what I want to play are one. I can play whatever I hear.

MD: What did you study with Kenny Washington?

Greg: I've never felt as "studied" as I should be, but from playing so much you develop your own technique and what works for you. But Kenny helped me to know records and the history of music. We focused on Philly Joe Jones, Tony, and Elvin. We really got into the ride cymbal, too. I did more technique-oriented things when I studied with his old

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teacher, Justin DiCioccio.

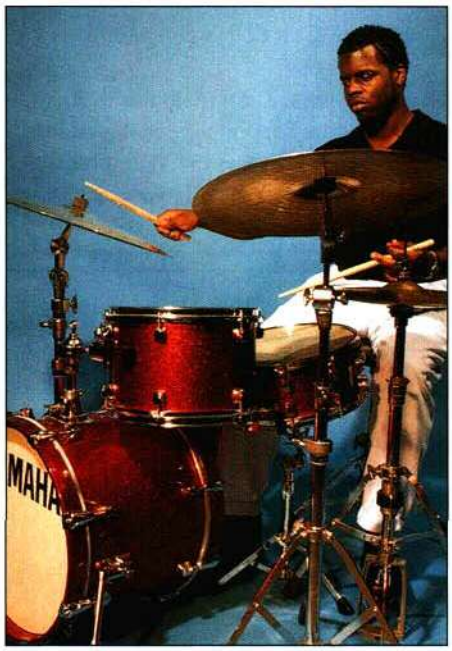
I got a lot from studying with Kenny, though. He won't settle for bullshit, although some people are offended by that. Since we're related now—he married my aunt—we talk even more.

Kenny and I worked on comping and playing up tempos. I developed playing really fast tempos when I was with Betty Carter. And that gig involved playing uptempo but doing it *very* quietly.

MD: How do you do that?

Greg: I developed it by starting out playing fast at a normal volume, and then *gradually* decreasing the volume level until it was soft. I'd try to build up the speed at the same time.

I don't practice with a metronome. I feel it gives you metronomic time. If you're working on your snare drum chops or playing with a click track, then you want that steady pulse, but not for developing good-feeling time.



"I'd never go to someone else's gig and say, 'Man, I can do that better.' If you're doing that, you're wasting your energy on something you don't need to be concerned about."

MD: But then how do you develop solid time?

Greg: Music is gonna move. As long as it's grooving, it's okay. You only notice when it's not grooving. I've been to shows where a drummer was killing even if he did speed up because things felt so good. It didn't matter, because the groove was so intense.

I'm a firm believer in practice. I do work out some things on the bandstand, because with my schedule it can be the only time I'm on the drums. It's a work in progress. I'll never be able to say that I've got it all together. The stuff Tony Williams was playing was on such a level—it has not been touched. It's been reinterpreted, but not touched. And that cat could do it all.

Since I am not at that level, and I probably won't *ever* be there, I know I have to keep working and shedding. If I don't practice on the pad I like to work things out on the gig. Sometimes you work things out in the room and then on the gig it has a whole different vibe.

MD: Backtracking for a minute, you went from island rhythms to playing funk when you were a kid?

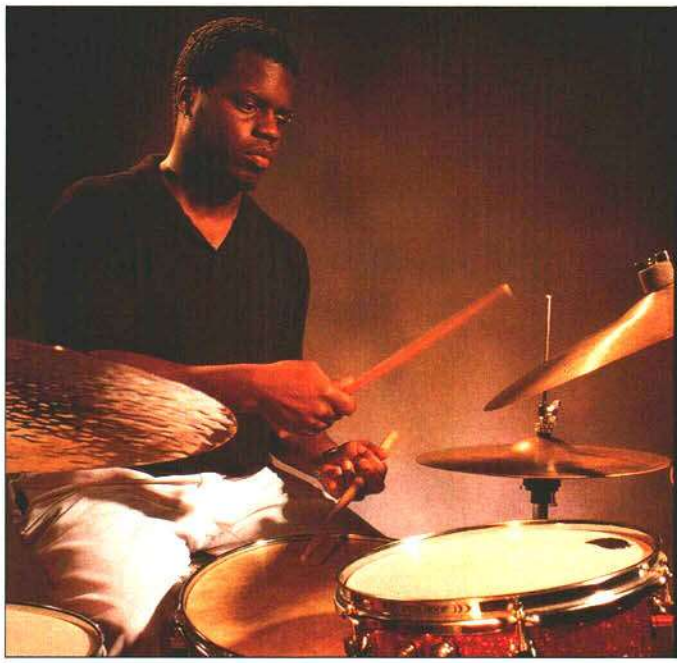
Greg: When I was about eleven, I lived next door to Marvin "Smitty" Smith. That was 1985. He heard me playing one day—his room was on the same level in the next building, so he could hear me. He rang the doorbell and wanted to come in. He sat down and played this killing groove. I was like, "Who is this guy?" I started studying with him.

We got into all kinds of things: ride cymbal technique, double bass, and he really grilled me on the rudiments. I worked with him on the Ted Reed book, the Charlie Wilcoxon book—which is a bitch—and the Jim Chapin book.

There's an old Philly Joe Jones brush book I used to work out of too. It had all of his strokes and some tricks he did. When I was playing the brushes a lot with Ray Brown, I had little things that I would do. I always found it a challenge to play those fast tempos that you play on the ride cymbal with the brushes. Everyone can play fast on the cymbal, but to do that with brashes is a challenge.

MD: What else did you study with Marvin?

Greg: We'd set up two drumsets and trade



Droppin' Bombs

These are the albums that Greg says best represent his playing:

Artist	Album
Joe Henderson	Lush Life
Betty Carter	Droppin' Things
Christian McBride	Family Affair
Ray Brown	Live At Scullers
Joshua Redman	Above And Beyond
Eric Reed	Manhattan Melodies

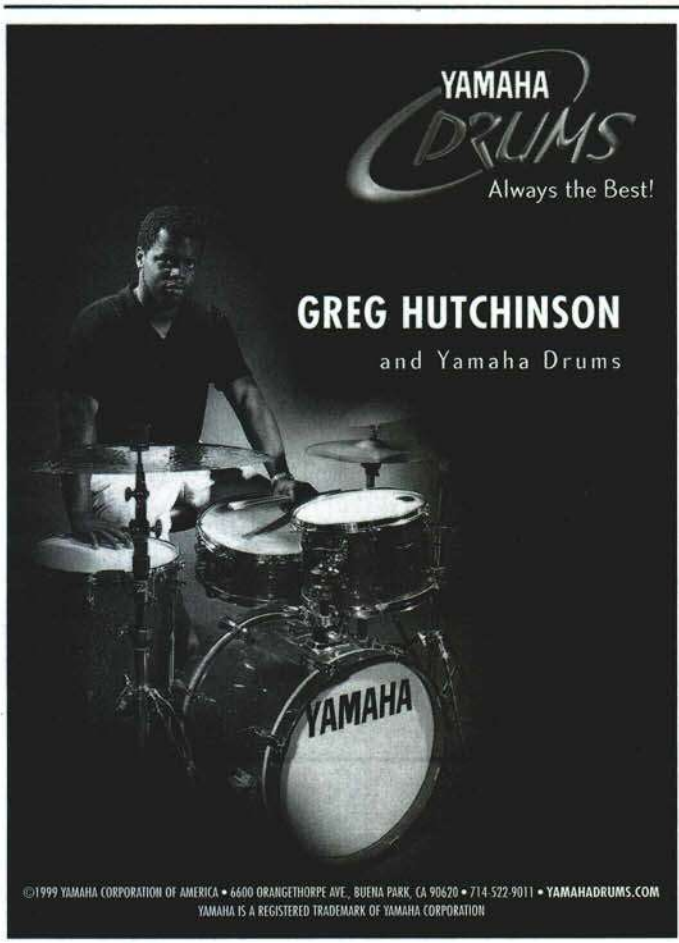
...and these are the ones he listens to for inspiration:

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	Four And More	Tony Williams
John Coltrane	Transition	Elvin Jones
Art Blakey	Big Beat	Art Blakey
Philly Joe Jones	Drums Around The World	Philly Joe Jones
Miles Davis	Circle In The Round	Philly Joe Jones
Roy Haynes	Cracklin'	Roy Haynes
John Scofield	Pick Hits	Dennis Chambers
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham

with each other. With him, even more so than what I learned on the drums, just his love, passion, and energy for learning inspired me. And he was into everything. I mean, this guy would stay up and practice a conga pattern for two hours, playing it exactly the same with no variations. That was a good lesson for me, because it taught me to focus. I'd sit and play time—without playing anything else—for hours. Or I'd work on feathering the bass drum for hours. Or I'd play a funk groove until it felt really good. I'll play on a pad and watch TV—and drive my girlfriend crazy all night. I like to practice to the TV show *The Practice* [laughs].

MD: The late Betty Carter was the master of tempos. Was that a demanding gig in terms of tempos?

Greg: Oh yeah. I was with her from 1990 to '92. I was recommended by Stephen Scott. I'd met her at the Brooklyn Park bandshell when Winard Harper was playing with her. I told her, "One day I will be



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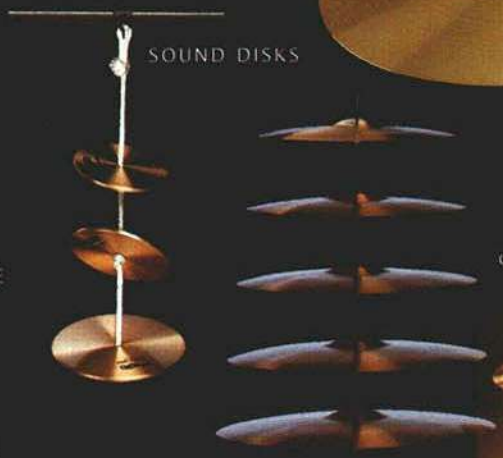

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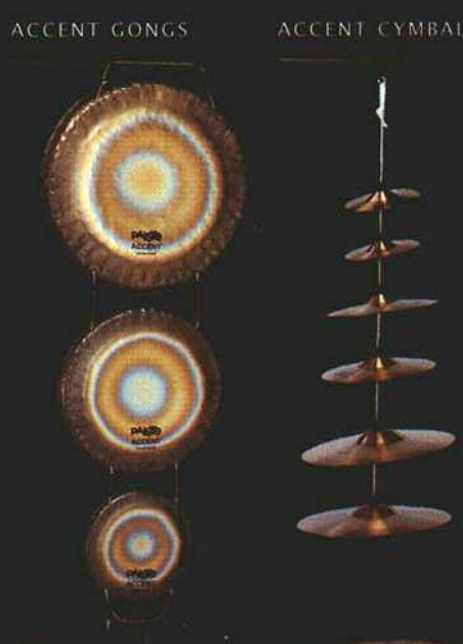

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playing in your band." She said, "Isn't that nice." I said, "You watch." Then, when I showed up at her door to audition, I was totally prepared. I knew all the music. I got the gig, and I felt so privileged to work with her. After that I went with Roy Hargrove.

MD: Would Betty start the set with a fast tempo?

Greg: Yes, she always wanted to test you. If she thought that you were tired, she'd do some fast stuff. I always got a kick out of it. I was always ready.

We'd play a trio tune out front and then Betty would come out. With her, everything is signals. Everything is...God, I keep saying "is." Damn. Okay. Everything with her was based on hand signals. Where she dropped her arm was where the tempo was. So say if we were coming out of a real fast tune and she dropped her arm, that's where you got the new tempo from. That was a challenge.

MD: You've played with some of the best and, frankly, you've *become* one of the best. What surprises you about interacting with these jazz greats?

Greg: The great surprise was that with Ray and Betty, not only were they great musicians and great people, but they were great businesspeople. Ray booked all his own gigs, and he's a millionaire. He worked with Ella Fitzgerald and Charlie Parker, did the Merv Griffin show for years, produced the Brothers Johnson records—you name it. And Betty was a millionaire too, and not just one million. She had property in Hawaii.

MD: What did Ray stress?

Greg: Saving your money. You have to save for those rainy days. I'm investing. It's me and Dean Witter [laughs]. And my lady, Lisa Ellison, keeps up with all that 'cause I'm gone all the time. As a musician you have to keep saving and investing and doing things for yourself. I can see Joshua Redman reaching that level as well. Musicians today realize that it's tricky out there. You have to be smart with your money. It's not about partying. This is life.

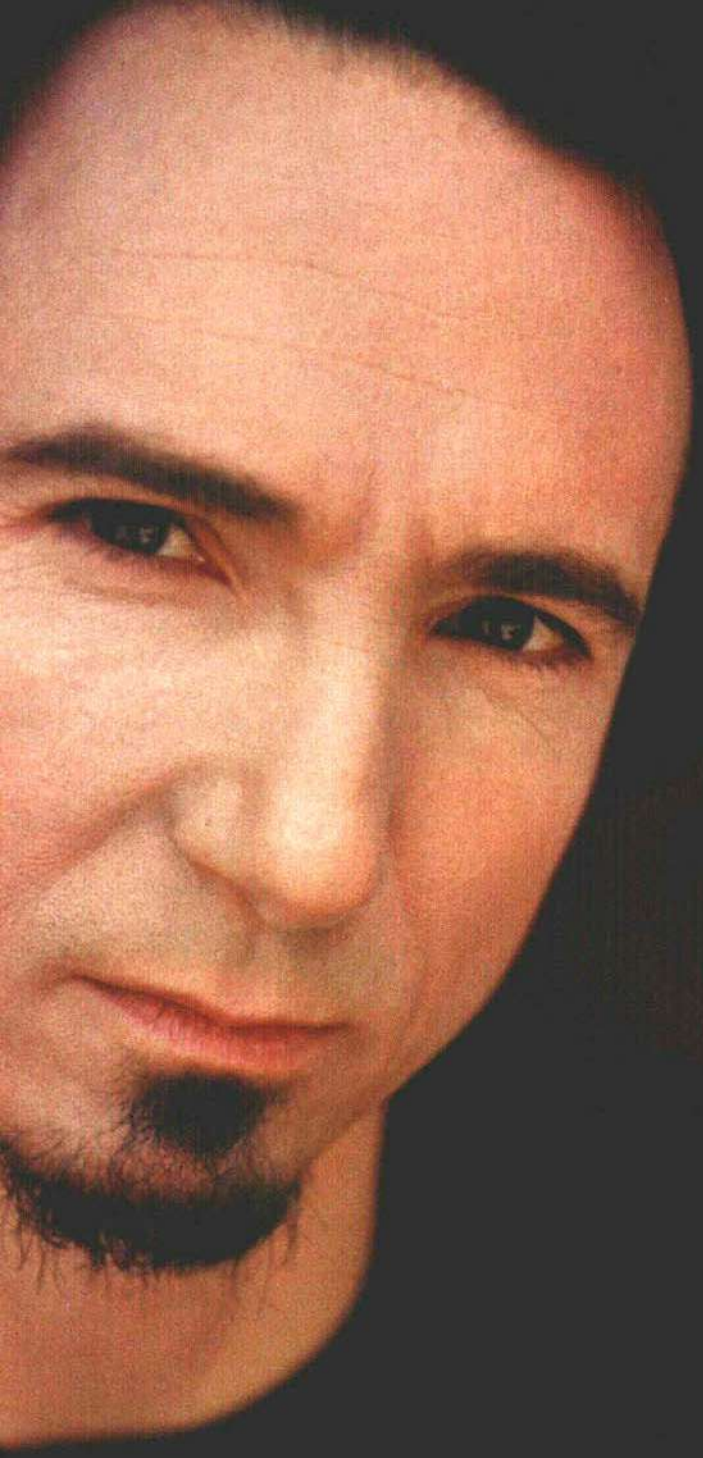
MD: So the chronology of your career?

Greg: I went from Betty Carter to three years with Roy Hargrove, who I did five albums with. That was a special band. We were all on the same page musically. We were trying to play and learn, and at the same time we wanted to do something different. We had a chemistry. Then I went with Ray Brown. And now I'm with Joshua Redman.

A friend of mine said to me, "Man, you always seem to get a great gig and keep it." I think that has to do with loving to play and *coining* to play every night. When you're on the bandstand you're there to function within the group. It's not just about me; it's about everybody. I have a little history now, and people like that. They know I can cover it and there won't be any problems. And I try to be fun and not be uptight.

MD: You must have heard a lot of stories about the business, as well as stories of racism from some of the old veterans you've worked with. Were either Ray or Betty bitter about that?

Greg: Maybe, but I never picked up on it. They were aware of it. Ray told me a story of when he was playing with Frank Sinatra in Vegas and Frank was going into a casino, but back then black people were not allowed to go in. Frank was like, "C'mon Ray, let's go." Ray was hesitating. "Let's go. I'm Frank Sinatra, they do what I say."



science or fiction?

there is a popular myth about drumheads.
it goes something like this:
before buying a head, take it out of the box
hold it by the rim and tap it to see if it sounds good
by itself...if it sounds good off the drum,
it's bound to sound good when it's on, right?

well, consider this...
a drumhead's film is much like a guitar string in nature.
they're both stretched over a bridge, nut or bearing edge,
and when struck or plucked, vibrate at a certain frequency
which we perceive as pitch.

most other drumheads have a sharp collar,
heat formed into the film which does two things:
it pre-tunes the surface of the head indiscriminately...
and, it creates a node (or dead spot).
more often than not, this collar is not quite centered,
and worse, it forms the surface of the head at an angle to the rim.

then the counter hoop and head sit on the drum crooked.
when you try to tighten it down evenly,
you pull the node into the playing surface,
and pull the playing surface across the edge.
a head like that will never tune up,
no matter how it sounded off the drum.

think of a guitar string, pre-bent at the bridge and nut.
when it's tuned the bend forms a dead spot.
neither string nor head will vibrate freely.

attack heads have a subtle rounded collar.
this puts no pre-tuned false pitch on the drumhead,
no node or dead spot,
and no crooked surface to prevent proper alignment and tuning.
they marry perfectly to any shape of bearing edge.

would you check a guitar string off a guitar to see if it sounds good?

attack heads are loose and slack out of the box
in order to tune correctly when stretched across a bearing edge.

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And they went in. Ray used to hang out with Redd Foxx. Need I say more?

MD: Which drummers would you say you've emulated for swing?

Greg: Philly Joe and Art Blakey. Philly's ride cymbal danced. I always refer people to the Miles Davis CD *Circle In The Round,* and the track "Blues No. 2" [also on *Someday My Prince Will Come].* That's some of the hippest shit I've ever heard! At certain points he's bashing, but it's a controlled burn. I like that. You can bash and still have control over the music.

MD: On "Open Sesame" from Christian McBride's *Family Affair,* you're totally in Tony Williams mode.

Greg: Oh yeah, I was hearing Tony and some Jack DeJohnette. I'd never done a record where I was able to stretch like that. Up until then it was pretty much traditional. You wouldn't play that kind of stuff over some bop tunes; it wouldn't work. But Christian said, "This is gonna be an open record. Play all that stuff people think you *can't* play."

People put you in a bag, because they've seen you on one gig playing straight-ahead. That is so narrow-minded. That's in the past. A good friend of mine, Chris Dave, plays with Kenny Garrett, but he also plays with Mint Condition, which is a platinum-selling R&B band. This cat plays some scary R&B stuff.

MD: Are there other styles of music you'd like to play?

Greg: I'd like to play some more aggressive stuff like alternative rock, believe it or not. I like music, not just jazz music.

MD: I thought you might say you'd want to play some of the reggae or island music you grew up with. What were the songs you played in the Trinidadian style growing up?

Greg: A lot of island songs. The big thing was to take a popular song and put a different groove on it.

MD: So playing the second-line groove on McBride's "I'm Coming Home" is easy for you.

Greg: He wanted it to have that kind of flavor.

MD: So you were checking out the reggae guys when you were a little kid?

Greg: Oh yeah, Sly Dunbar, Carlton Nesbit, and my dad, Melvin Hutchinson, who was a drummer. I checked him out. I'd sit and watch him play reggae. He would have a cigarette in his mouth and be laying down some heavy rhythmic stuff. Incredible. That was an everyday thing around our house. He played in bands for a while, and then he went on the road with Billy Ocean for a while playing percussion.

MD: I'd like to get your thoughts on working with two important bassists, Christian McBride and Ray Brown.

Greg: Christian lays back a bit more than Ray does. But Christian, being into James Brown, his vibe has that element in it that makes it fun. When he's walking a line, he'll play some funky stuff right in the middle of the line. Whew!

Ray is coming from a whole different time period. It's still funky, but it's a different kind of funk. Ray will go out and play golf all day and then come in and play the gig and be killing! Christian will sit around listening to James Brown all day and then play a gig.

MD: What do you think drummers should focus on in their development?

Greg: Touch. Don't beat the drums; get a sound *out* of the drums. Take the bass drum, for instance. Tony pulled the sound

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out of the bass drum, so when he hit it it would ring. With most guys it's just a thud—even with some jazz cats. You have to hit and release with one motion.

Sometimes I hear drummers say, "I can't get a sound out of these drums." It's not the drums, it's you. I've watched Billy Higgins get great sounds playing brushes on a newspaper. So don't tell me it's the drums.

MD: Do you keep the drums tuned the same for *all* your jazz gigs?

Greg: Pretty much, except for big band, where I tune the drums a bit lower. But on quartet and smaller group stuff I keep them basically the same.

MD: Is it a challenge to be out with Joshua Redman now?

Greg: I played on his very first album, so in a way it's like stepping back into something that I already knew. Brian Blade [who worked with Redman] was killing with Josh. Everybody was used to hearing Brian in the band, so here I come and it's a totally different thing. It's a challenge.

MD: Is there a feeling of competition between you and some of the other, younger top players, like Brian Blade and Clarence Penn?

Greg: No. We all have our own voice and do different things. If someone hires me for a gig it's because they like what I do. They hire Clarence and Brian for the same reasons. We're all friends. We want the best for each other.

That competitive vibe is not happening. Music is not supposed to be competitive. It's supposed to be fun. Besides, since everyone has something different to say, how can you compete?

MD: You would never go hear Brian play and think, Man, I wonder how he does that?

Greg: Sure, we rap and hang, but I'd never go to someone else's gig and say, "Man, I can do that better," or "Why don't I have that gig?" I would just say, "That stuff was killing." You get yours when you're *supposed* to get yours. If you put a negative vibe on somebody else's stuff, well, that will come back to you. It's karma. If you do that, you're wasting your energy on something that you don't need to be concerned about. You need to be concerned about playing your instrument. If you're worrying about a gig, maybe that's why you don't *have* the gig. There's no time for bitterness. There's too much positive stuff going on in this world to be bitter.

Stone Temple Pilots'

Eric Kretz

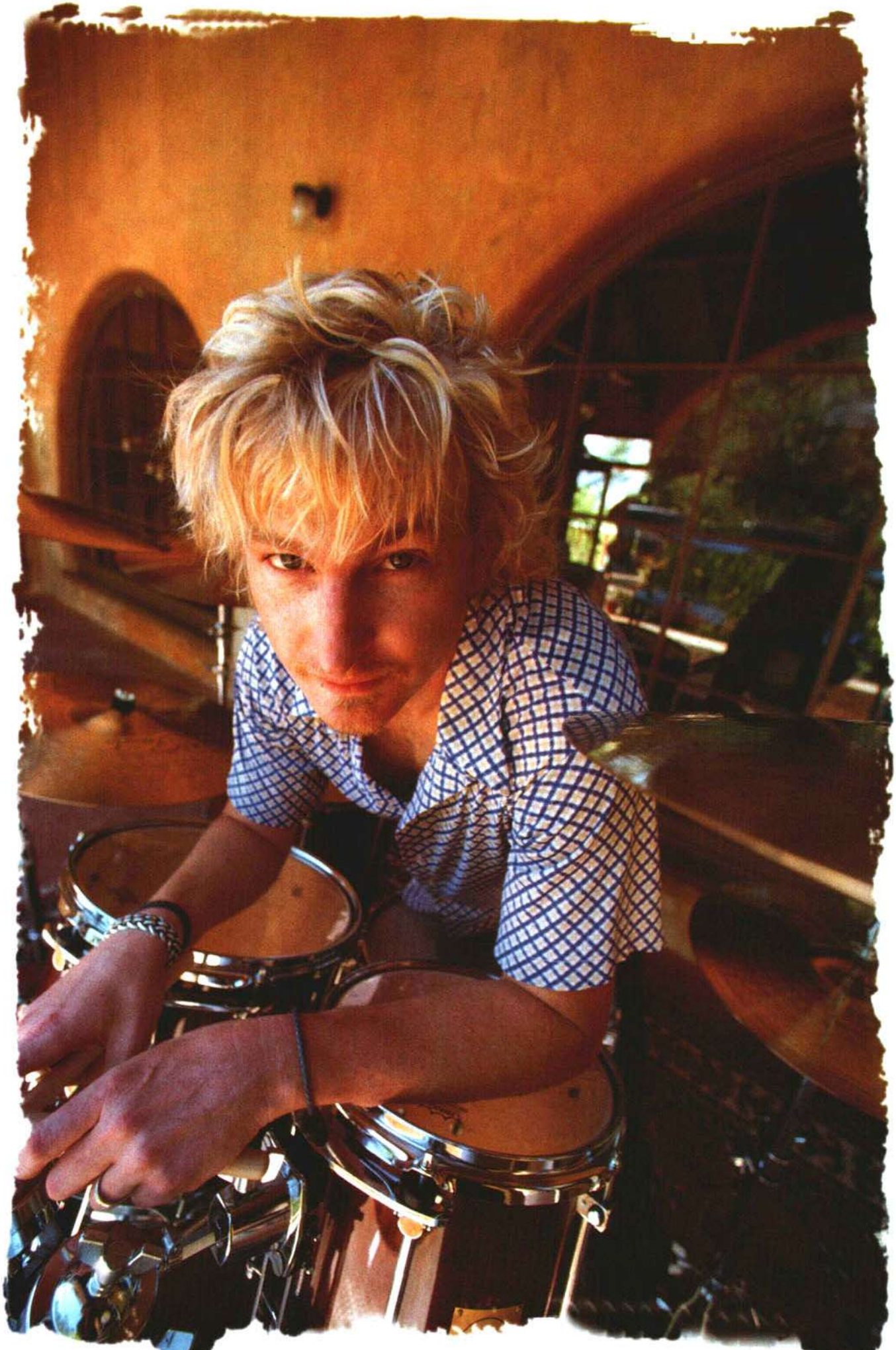
Surviving No. 4

story by David John Farinella | photos by Aldo Mauro

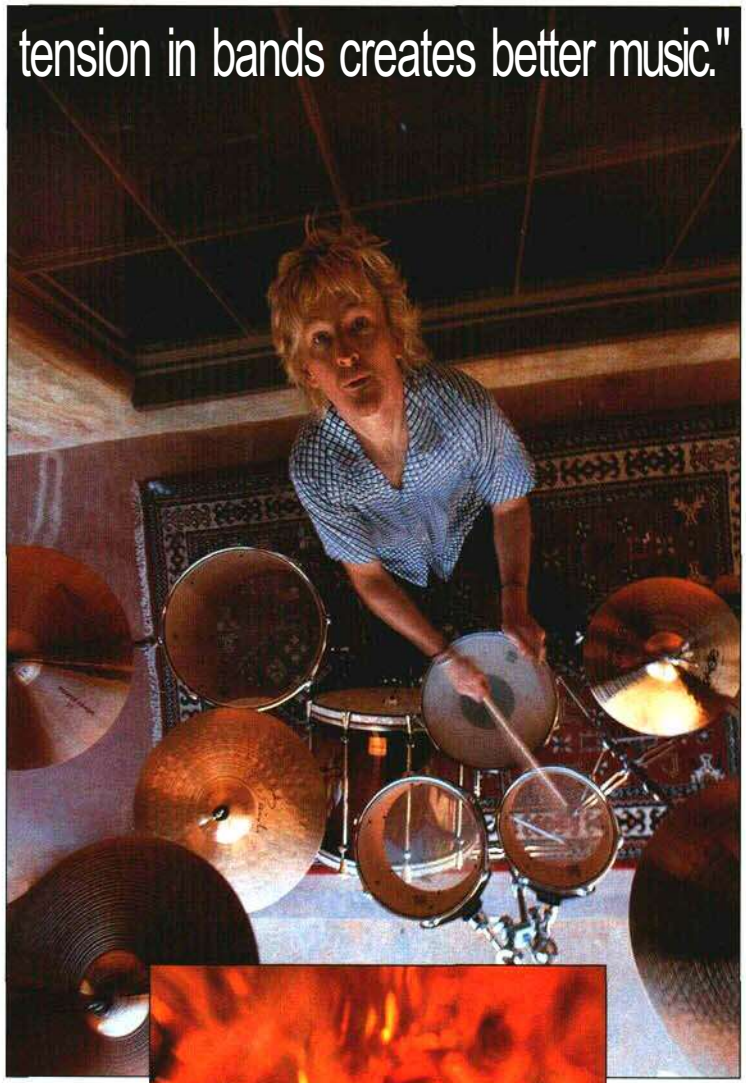
As a Los Angeles afternoon turns to evening, Eric Kretz eases himself into a wood lounge chair. He looks out over the garden area of the Sunset Marquis hotel after a number of hours answering questions about Stone Temple Pilots, the band's new album, and probably a dozen or so questions about how he feels about STP frontman Scott Weiland's ongoing chemical dependency. (At press time Weiland was four months into a year-long sentence at the Biscaluz Recovery Center.)

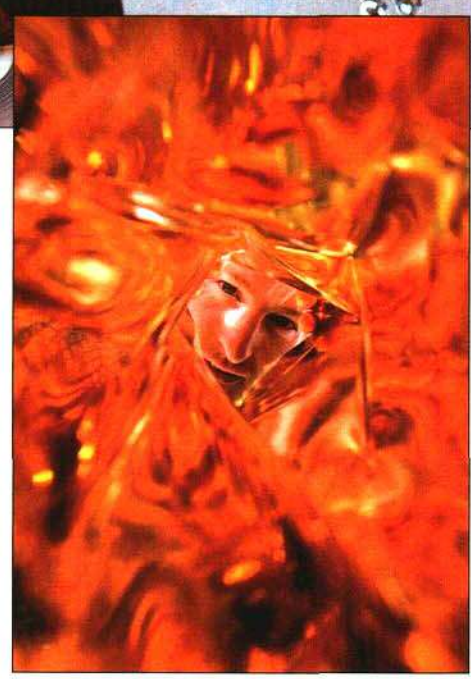
But nearly an hour after the first question was offered by *Modern Drummer,* Kretz sat back for a second, looked around, and offered without prompting, "STP is a heavy machine when it starts rolling again. It takes up a lot of time, a lot of energy, and a lot of thought; a lot of diplomacy, mediating things, coming up with things." Then he looks away with a touch of finality in his eyes.

To be sure, the big machine has cranked out another winner in *No. 4,* an album that blends classic STP bash 'em up numbers with the haunting "Atlanta" and the twelve-string pop-psychedelia of "Sour Girl." It's the first album in three years from the lads, and while their current road plans are on hold pending you-know-who, Kretz is charged about the future.



"There's really no truth to the whole thing about drugs making people better, more creative artists or that tension in bands creates better music."





MD: Is it exciting to be back doing the STP thing?

Eric: Oh, I love it. When it gets to a certain level of doing it every day and looking at these guys every morning on the bus, then I'll kind of get sick of 'em. But after a week or two apart we really do miss each other. Despite all the pressures and inner turmoil, we're just family. And like most families, you just can't get away from it. When you do, you miss it.

MD: The last time you sat down with *MD* you were talking about the demise of STP. How do you feel being here now?

Eric: The main question that keeps coming up is, "What were the forces that brought you back together?" I would just like to say that we never broke up, we were just *fed* up. I'm sure I didn't mention that we broke up the last time. We just couldn't work as a four-piece anymore. Scott had to get his things out, and his addiction was affecting us. There were other avenues we wanted to venture into as well, and we needed a functioning base in order to achieve that.

MD: What's different this time?

Eric: Scott is basically up and running again.

MD: Can you believe that you've been together for thirteen years?

Eric: Wow, thirteen years. I'm sure that has something to do with the chemistry between us. On the first day of rehearsal for the new album we came up with two songs, and Scott was there instantly writing lyrics. There was all this tension on that first day. But we had so much in us after a two-year vacation from each other that it was just all dying to come out, and the chemistry was undeniable.

Every day after that we came up with a song or two. It just worked really well. I guess we're like a race car, in that when we're working together we're just full throttle and ahead of the pack. Then, unfortunately, like all race cars, mechanical failures happen and we're stuck just sitting there in the garage waiting for parts to come in and for the mechanic to fix us. We're definitely not your traditional Japanese consumer car [laughs].

MD: Do you feel your evolution as a drummer comes from playing by yourself, or does it come from the people you're playing with?

Eric: You're limited in that respect by the people you play with. If you play with people above your level, all you do is keep learning. Whereas if you play with people below your level, all you do is show off. So in that sense we like to surround ourselves with people better than us in order to keep learning. What I find myself doing, being so bored with modern music, is really getting back into what I was into in high school, which is progressive rock like Emerson, Lake & Palmer and the very progressive jazz-fusion stuff. It really got me excited about music again, because it's so unslick.

MD: So we'll be hearing some Billy Cobham influences on the album?

Eric: No, because the songs never really lend themselves to those kinds of fills and that kind of "speed demon" energy. In that sense you only play what the song calls for, which we all kind of check each other on. We push each other to continue to get better and better, to continue to grow as musicians. But in the same sense, we all put the stop sign up when someone is getting too fancy or too big. If I do too many fills or come in too early—something I might think is really cool—someone else might say, "You know, that doesn't work for me there." Or they'll say, "I know what you're thinking of, but it kind of ruins the overall vibe of the song." The same thing happens with bass, guitar, and vocals. We've always been song-first and individual-solos second. To me that always makes for better, more timeless music.

MD: What don't you like about "modern" music?

Eric: Part of it is the slickness. When we were recording at NRG, the engineer was amazed. He said for the previous three or four months there hadn't been a band in there that played their actual music to tape. Everybody's using Pro Tools and fixing themselves. We leave our mistakes on the record. It's not like we're idiots saying, "Oh shit!" We know that they're there. But it has a vibe to it.

It's so refreshing to hear *Zeppelin I* and *II,* and the more you listen to them the more you actually hear Bonham making mistakes. You go, "How can that be? He's the greatest drummer ever." He made mistakes and they left 'em, but that's what gave the songs extra character.

MD: For *Tiny Music* you recorded drums in a cedar closet and on the front lawn. How was it to be in a real studio this time?

Eric: It's actually easier. Brendan [O'Brien, producer] and Nick [DiDia, engineer] are amazing, but some of the tones on the record are a little strange because of the rooms that they were recorded in. I gotta admit that recording *Tiny Music* in that house setting was one of the best times of our lives. You wake up and you've got dogs, kids, parents, and grandparents all running around while you're performing and taping, and it was really comfortable. In the studio it's a lot easier to experiment because it's real quick. Everything is ten feet in front of you and just a cable away.

MD: How did you approach your setup this time?

Eric: For the main rock songs I still use my GMS kit, which keeps sounding better every year. Even after sitting in the storage warehouse for over a year, I pulled it out and it just sounded great. I didn't have to tune it or anything. I also recorded on an old '58 Ludwig kit that I got a couple of years ago. I used that on everything that wasn't bombastic rock and for lots of overdubs to create different sounds.

Usually with the main rock kit we'd mike that up the traditional way, with lots of mic's. But for the Ludwig kit we'd put two or three mic's at a distance to get an overall sound. I love playing that way, because you get to hear the drums better in your headphones and you get to play to the compression and play to the whole room. With the whole big drumset up you're pretty much trying to compete against the guitars and bass, so you're more worried about powering out through the song and putting all the energy you can into the songs.

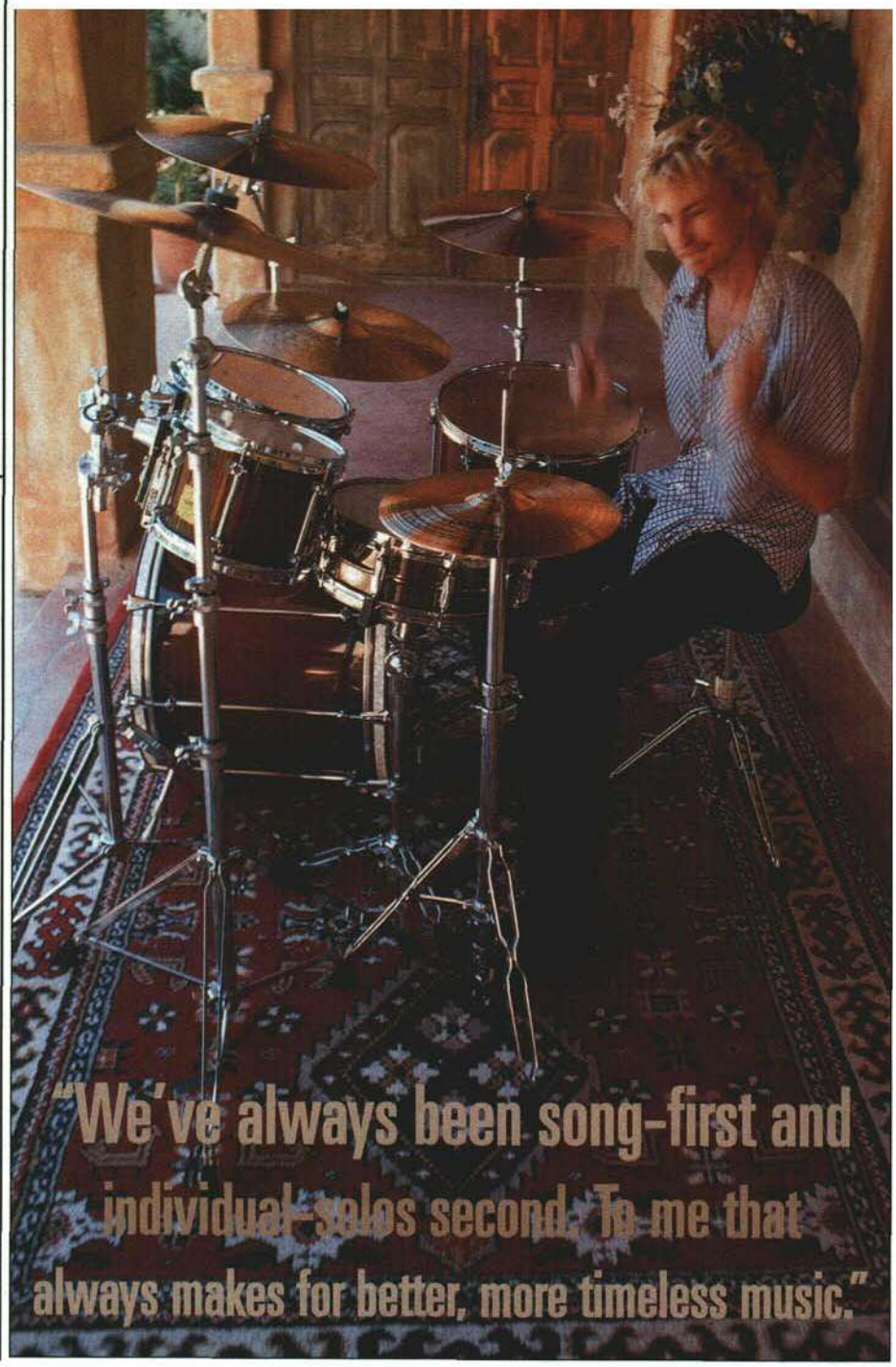
MD: Can you define the Eric Kretz sound?

Eric: It's not a "sound." I think I try to achieve more of a style. There are so many

great drummers, like Billy Cobham, John Bonham, Bill Bruford, Buddy Rich. I don't try to top what they did technically, because they're just so damn good. And the music that we do doesn't call for that kind of playing. So I try to achieve more of a recognizable style so that when you hear an STP song you know that it's us and you know it's me playing. Modern rock bands are kind of missing that, not only with drums, but with guitars and singers and everything else. It seems like—I hate to keep bringing up classic rock—but you just knew when someone particular was playing an instrument, even when they joined other bands.

MD: Let's talk about a couple of songs from *No. 4*. "Atlanta" has a big drum sound—very present, very orchestral.

Eric: That's my '58 Ludwig, a little four-piece. The first half of the song is with brushes, just nice and soft. I think that was a song we used two to three mic's on, because it wasn't about miking up the toms and the



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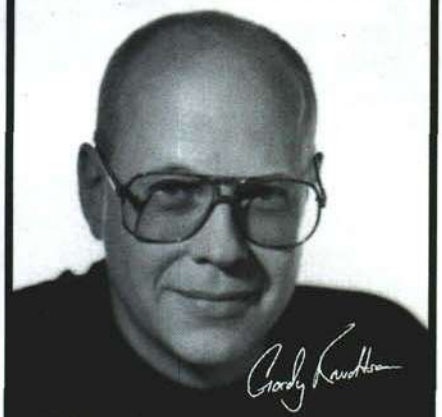

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hi-hat. It was about playing with the compression in the room, playing to the exact tempo of the song, and everybody playing together. In the second half of the tune, after the break-down, I come in with sticks. We knew that the song would probably have a string arrangement at the end. Then I came in and played some orchestral bells and a kettle drum when the string players came in.

MD: The playing was pretty simple, which is such a contrast for an STP song.

Eric: As I'm getting older I love playing with that kind of finesse. It's really, really rewarding because it's very natural to me and it doesn't hurt as much. [laughs] It doesn't wrench the back so much to try to outplay Marshall stacks.

MD: Yet "Heaven & Hot Rods" and "Down" are classic STP rock songs. Is that still a big part of you guys?

Eric: Very much a part of us. Thank God I'm in this band, because I love the dichotomy of playing both styles. I would be bored if we just played rock or just kind of went waltzy on everybody. I wouldn't be fulfilled creatively.

MD: Any of these songs get a lot of overdubs?

Eric: The one song that had the most interesting drum overdub was "No Way Out." I threw a crazy drum loop through a guitar effect onto the intro. Then I played the main kit over that. I was playing the shell of a bass drum and we mixed in a snare drum that we wanted to sound as horrible as possible. At the end I went back and did a Santana-type fill to make it get crazy. I think there are three different drumsets on that tune.

MD: Was that your first exploration into loops?

Eric: Actually, back on the second record we put a drum loop on "Lounge Life." Robert came up with some backwards twelve-string harmonics—which they're still using on MTV for the news. But we knew it had to be a drum loop, because there's no way someone could play backwards and keep it that straight. It's fun because you get that repetition thing you don't get playing live. But I wouldn't want to do records like that all the time, like most modern records are—all cut to hell that way.

MD: Are you guys a different band today from the one you were three years ago?

Eric: Yeah. We get along much better now because we air out so many issues now and get to the point.

MD: How did you get to that point?

Eric: At the end of last year we started talking about getting back together. On the positive side, we talked about those things we really missed about each other—writing, playing, and being in the same room together. Of course, we also discussed what we hated so much about each other and the difficulties of working together. Once we got all that out, it just really made it easy to agree to do this. We're excited to do it again because we can talk about things. Three or four years ago we had so much frustration and couldn't express it. And when we did let it out, it usually vented in a completely wrong way.

There's really no truth to the whole thing about drugs making people better, more-creative artists, or that tension in bands creates better music. But *we* have to deal with these things. Even though we love each other and we'd all love it if we got along better, there's still the desire among all of us to play better. That's just a part of being in this band.

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Bill Rieflin
Birth Of An Artist

Story by Matt Peiken

Photos by John E. Hollingsworth

Ministry Nine Inch Nails Chris Cornell KMFDM Swans Robert Fripp

Bill Rieflin is a drummer more by circumstance than design. And he certainly never aimed for a career as a hired gun for artists on the fringe. But here he is, on the cusp of the millennium, with performances on nearly fifty recordings—eleven in 1999 alone, including discs by Nine Inch Nails, Chris Cornell, an improvised collaboration with Robert Fripp and Trey Gunn, and his own exotic solo album, *Birth Of A Giant*

Still, Rieflin bristles somewhat at the mere label of "drummer," and it's hard to blame him. He's a pianist, guitarist, songwriter, freshly minted singer (on the solo disc), and—as another feather in his 1999 cap—head of his new record company.

"I definitely don't think as a drummer, and when I listen to music, I don't do so from a drummer's point of view," Rieflin says. "If I hear a great drumming performance on a piece of music I don't like, I'm not going to listen to it. I'm not that interested in drumming to the degree where I'll overlook everything else. The whole package has to be there."

Rieflin is best known among musicians, if not publicly, for his work along the industrial circuit—chiefly through five albums and associated tours with Ministry and, to a lesser degree, several contributions to KMFDM. Now thirty-nine years old, the Seattle resident invests far more time and energy than he would like to on the business end, of his label, First World Music (www.firstworldmusic.com). He's itching to find a road-worthy project.

"I'd really like to be busier musically," he says. "I ran into some friends in town the other day and they said, 'Wow, you must really be busy because your name is popping up all over the place.' I said the only difference is *now* I have a publicist."

MD: Did your new record develop through years of performing on other people's records, or rather does it capture a moment in time?

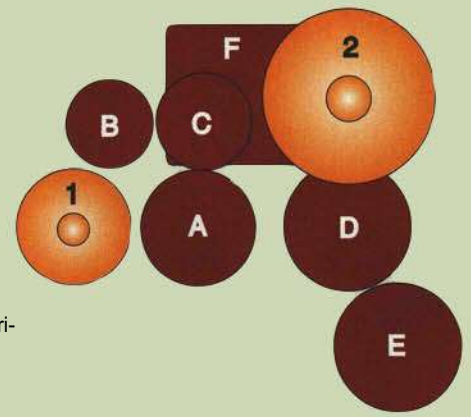
Bill: Actually, I wasn't remotely interested in capturing myself in any sincere way. My primary motivation was to make music I thought I'd like to hear, music that captured more of the attributes I like to hear. It was also a matter of working against things I don't like in much of the music I'm hearing these days. And that goes specifically to the drums, the way they're recorded. You can almost tell when a piece of music was recorded by the way the drums sound, just through certain trends and technologies that developed, such as the way certain reverbs have been used in recording the hi-hat, kick, or snare. So for my record, I didn't want any particular emphasis on the drums or any aspect of the drums. I actually wanted to work against the rock attitude of drums—the big kick and snare. Most of the drums were recorded with a single microphone, or maybe a few microphones. And I only had two tracks of drums pretty much through the whole record.

MD: Was that more for aesthetic purposes or in protest to contemporary recording?

Bill: You can argue both points, so I won't. But really, when you get right down to it, my motivations are always musical. I could probably come up with some clever things to say about what I do, and to a degree, the way my drums were recorded is intentionally contrary. But there also are very practical reasons for doing it this way. I have a rehearsal studio in downtown Seattle where I have my drums set up, and I largely recorded my drums there. I have a cheap little stereo mic', and I'd play through that into my DAT machine. I'd

Rieflin's Rig

Drums: Gretsch in burnt orange finish
A. 5x14 Ludwig Supraphonic snare
B. 8x10 tom
C. 10x12 tom
D. 16x16 Garcia floor tom (Seattle drum maker)
E. 16x16 Ludwig floor tom (black finish)
F. 16x20 bass drum



Cymbals: Paiste (Bill occasionally adds various Sound Formula and Signature crashes to the following basic setup)
1. 15" hi-hats (old Zildjian)
2. 22" Old K Zildjian ride

Hardware: Tama, including a Titan model hi-hat stand; DW 5000 bass drum pedal (spring tension not too tight) with attached trigger and a Danmar firm felt beater; Rhythm Tech Hat Trick (mounted tambourine)

Sticks: Regal 5A with wood tip ("I like their finish.")

Electronics: ddrum triggers, Alesis DM5, Akai S3000, assorted pads

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador or Emperor on snare batter with Ambassador snare-side underneath, coated Ambassadors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath (no muffling), coated Ambassadors on bass drum with small hole in front head and felt strips on batter head for muffling

Ears: "I always use hearing protection when I play."

"For my record I wanted to work against the rock attitude of larger-than-life drums—the big kick and snare. Most of the drums were recordedwith a single microphone."

bring the tape home, listen through, find some bits that I felt sounded decent, loop them up on my sampler, and then start laying stuff on top. Some of them were for songs already written and some eventually went to songs that had yet to be written. But I recorded all of them for the purposes of using the drum parts on this record.

MD: If you're only using one mic', where do you place it?

Bill: Well, that depends. I place it where there's the best balance within the drumkit, within the recorded sound, so no one particular aspect of the drums is featured. I have a small Gretsch kit—20" kick with 10" and 12" power toms on a stand and two 16" floor toms. There are very slightly different alternate tunings on the floor toms. It's kind of like having one drum, but I can do figures on two that I can't do with one, and I like the impact of a 16" more than an 18".

MD: Your cymbals are very understated.

Bill: My good man, if you listen closely, you won't hear *any* cymbals on my record. Oh, I take that back. There's a cymbal on the song "Spy Thriller." I don't often use cymbals. I have a nice old Zildjian K ride cymbal I use sometimes. But I wanted to see what would happen without cymbals: Where would I go? What would I do for emphasis? What would I do to heighten the music? Once, as a drummer, you move yourself away from the role of placing emphasis—if, indeed, there's a need for this—then you must have faith that it will come out somewhere else, perhaps through another instrument. It might be that the song is structured in such a way that the emphasis is built into it and it doesn't need that punctuation. I've been playing this way for years with my own music, so I'm not conscious of the absence. It's almost second-nature to me.

This all stems from wanting to go against drumming cliches and the sorts of things drummers will do without thinking about it. Within the idiom of rock drums, there are some things that are typical, and it interests me to work against typical things. One of the ways of dealing with this is by removing an aspect that makes things easy. If a drummer's interested in creativity, sometimes throwing in an obstacle, or taking away a crutch, is a good way to go. By removing part of that learned motion and expected sound, the rest of your approach is bound to change.

MD: One of the interesting aspects of your solo record is your blend and alternation of acoustic drums and drum machines. What dictated the choice of voices for you?

Bill: Sometimes I'll have a specific sound

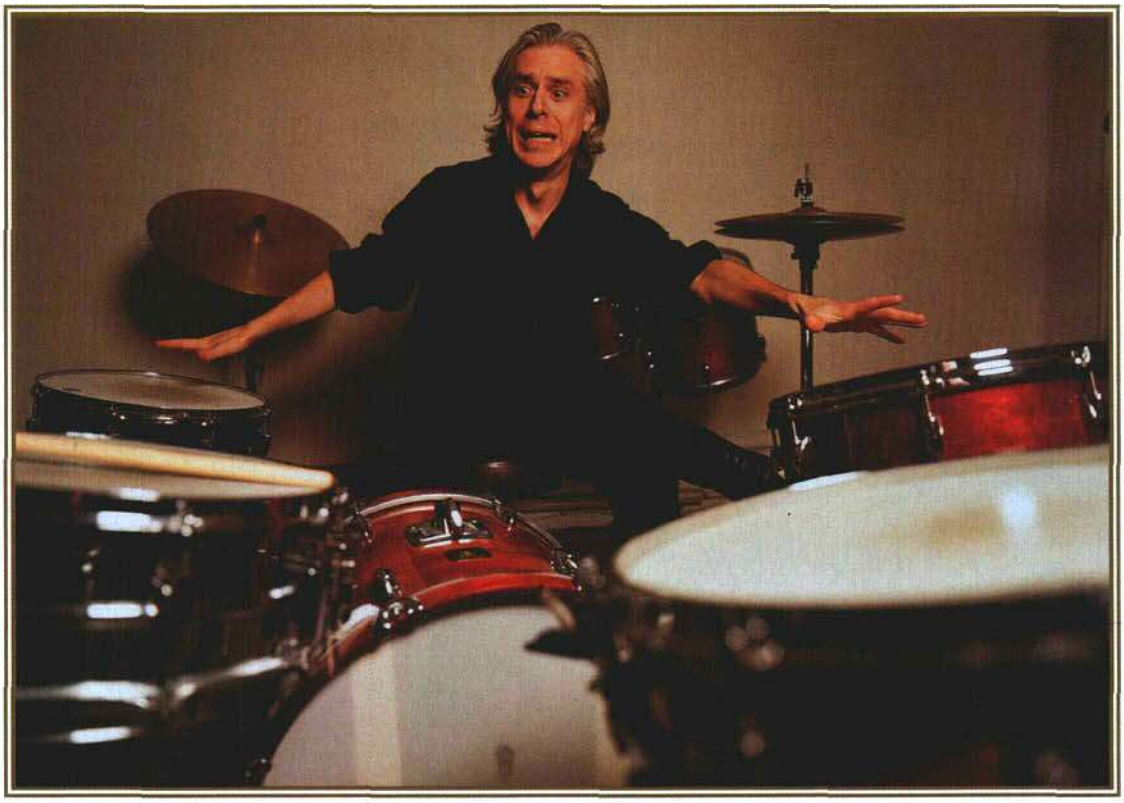
Drumming Ministry

These are the albums that Bill says best represent his playing (alphabetical by artist):

Artist	Album
Chris Connelly	Shipwreck
Ministry	The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste
Bill Rieflin	Birth Of A Giant
Rieflin, Fripp, Gunn	The Repercussions Of Angelic Behavior
Swans	The Great Annihilator
Ten Seconds	Ten Seconds

...and these are the drummers he listens to for inspiration:
Richard Bailey, Joey Baron, Benny Benjamin, Ignacio Berroa, Bill Bruford, Budgie, Matt Cameron, Matt Chamberlain, Aynsley Dunbar, Robert Ellis, Michael Giles, Willie Green, Kip Hanrahan, Al Jackson, Matt Johnson, Elvin Jones, Pat Mastelotto, Zigaboo Modeliste, Ringo Starr, Max Roach, and Stevie Wonder.

"My good man, if you listen closely, you won't hear *any* cymbals on my record. If a drummer's interested in creativity, sometimes throwing in an obstacle, or taking away a crutch, is a good way to go."



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Bill Rieflin

I'm going for, and oftentimes it's just some strange haunting in my imagination that I'm trying to figure out how to bring out. Sometimes I'm grasping to start with something—anything—and I just start twisting and bending, and I go from there. In almost every case, I start recording by putting the drums down. But there's a song at the end of the record called "Hanging Gardens," which was recorded apart from the rhythm track. The rhythm track was recorded and put on tape, then I recorded the song without listening to the rhythm track, and then I synched them up. The way we did it was I played the chords on keyboards and Robert [Fripp] was playing along on guitar, and the song was completely built up without the drums, and it fell where it fell. It didn't have a direct rhythmic relationship. But there definitely is some relationship between the drums and the other instruments, and the tension that comes out of that is really wonderful.

MD: As contrary as you were with the way you recorded the drums, were you trying to be more precise or particular about the other instruments?

Bill: The record was put together very quickly. But at the same time, there's nothing on there that didn't get examined very, very closely. I wanted it to really have a feel of performance, but there's a lot of programming on there, too. I also relinquished some control to the other people who performed on the record. There came a point where I just got tired of myself and was in need of other points of view.

MD: I know this is your first stab at lead vocals, and I think your voice lends sort of a dark, British feel to the record.

Bill: It's really funny you say that, because one of the comments I heard right away was that the English wouldn't like it because it sounds too American, and Americans wouldn't like it because it sounds too European. But there was no conscious effort to make the record sound that way. Actually, I really hate it when Americans sing with English accents, so I made sure to pronounce my "r's."

MD: Let's talk about *The Repercussions Of Angelic Behavior,* with Robert and Trey. For a record of improvised music, it's amazingly tight and cohesive.

Bill: I gotta say that when we were recording that record, I was very confused by it. We did this immediately after fifteen straight days of recording *Birth OfA Giant.* There was a lot of stress in my life at the time, too, so I was really beat. We'd play for twenty minutes or half an hour or whatever, then go back and listen to the tape. I was hearing all kinds of things in my playing I didn't like. It was just really weird. Then we'd go back and do some more, and we did this for three straight days. There were some really exciting moments and there were some really desperately depressing moments. But as I've come to live with the record, it's really come alive for me and I like it quite a bit.

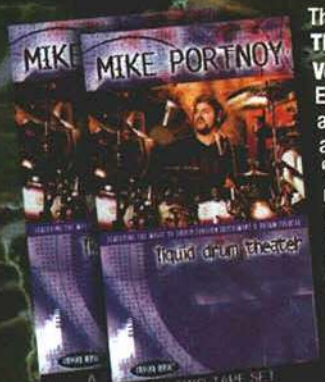
We're recommending that people listen to the disc in random-play mode. There's this one piece that's kind of slow rock, almost Zeppelin-y, and it has a very A-B-A-B feel to it, like it was written that way. I was really excited by that.

MD: Is that the most stretched-out you've ever been on record in terms of your drumming performance?

Bill: Yes, certainly on record. I was in the studio with two monsters—Trey and Robert—who've had the advantage of working together for ten years. They're a

DRUM VIDEOS FOR THE NEW M

Mike Portnoy
Liquid Drum Theater



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dynamic duo, and I'm just on my little Gretsch kit trying to keep up. But it was true improv in the sense that, when we started, none of us had any idea where it was going to go.

I think the music we ended up with really surprised us. On a couple of the pieces, we recorded as a trio, then overdubbed ourselves as another trio on top of that. So they have two versions of each of us. The effect of that on my playing was that when I recorded the first track, I had to think ahead and be aware of what I planned on doing on the second track. It forced me to listen closer to myself, as well as listen closer to the other guys and be aware of the relationship. Improvisation is a skill of being on your toes, of being in the present. But most of the time, it was really all about going for it.

MD: Let's go back further into your career. You're not exactly a session player, but you've been part of many different projects, in addition to your long stay in Ministry. How did it all start for you?

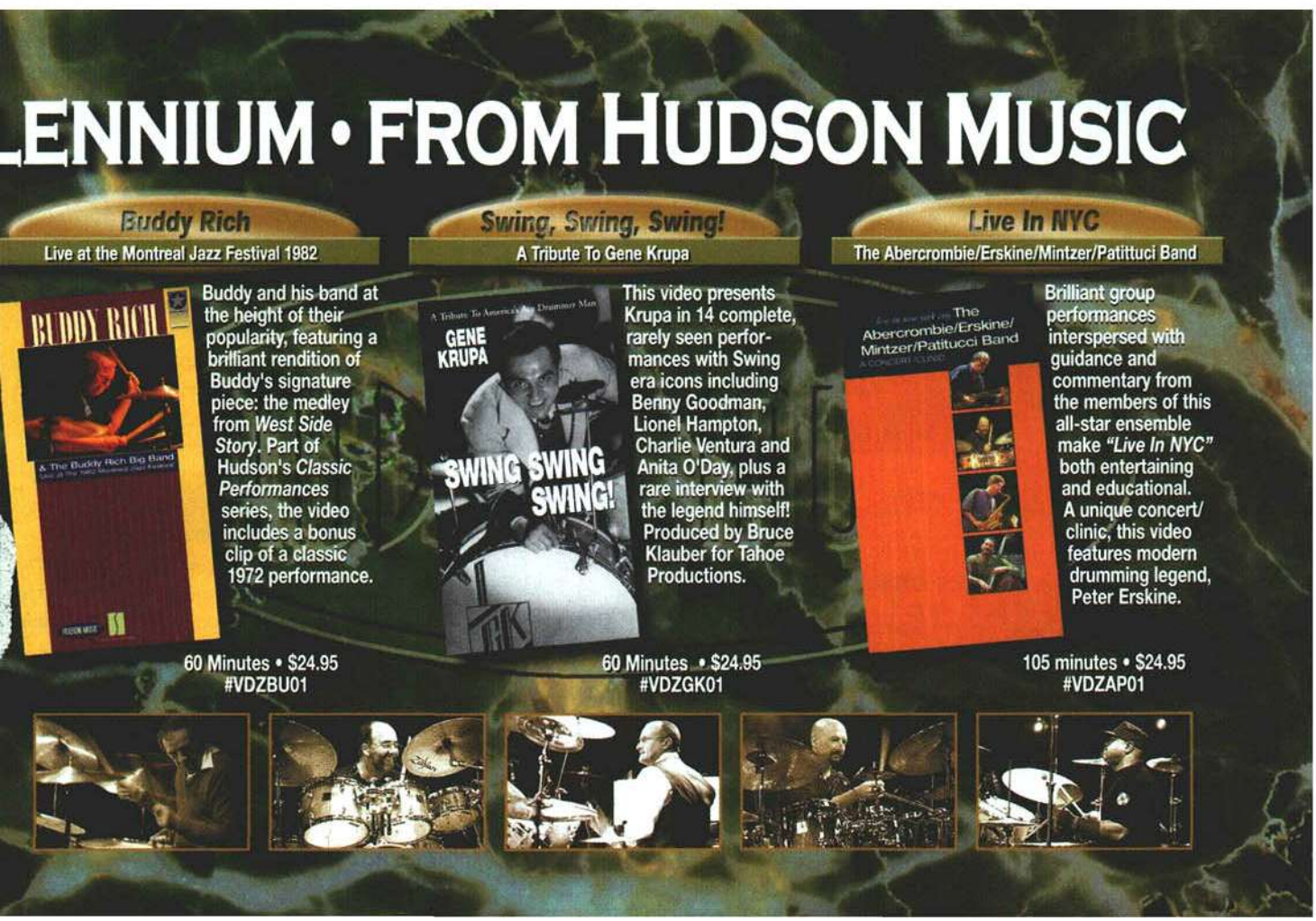
Bill: I started out in music through neighborhood bands, even as a pre-teenager. I wanted nothing to do with school music programs—to me, they seemed outrageously square—and I wasn't at all into practicing the drums. At one point, I even sold my drums because I didn't want to play anymore. I bought a guitar and taught myself to play it. I also took piano lessons for ten years. At twelve years old, I'd decided music was what I was going to do with my life, and I really wanted to become a guitar player. But at some point I was asked to join another neighborhood punk band as a drummer. You could follow the trail back a number of years and say I'm a drummer now because, at the time I joined these bands, all the other instruments were taken. I mean, how many times have you heard that story? It happens a lot, and in a sense, that happened with me. Today I'm known primarily as a drummer. But in 1988 I did an entire tour with Ministry as a guitar player. And I've never abandoned the other things I do.

MD: You said you knew very early on that you wanted a life as a musician. Did you ever move out of Seattle to try to make that happen?

Bill: Oh, of course. For many years, before Ministry, I was in a group called The Blackouts. They existed from 1979 to 1984 or '85, and in 1981 we moved out of Seattle. In 1981, if you were a band with ambition, you sure didn't stick around Seattle. It was at the edge of the world. There was a really thriving and exciting local music scene, but it didn't make it out of the area, and we were interested in making it out of here. So we moved to Boston, because we didn't know any better. Those were two miserable years for me. I lived in the most rancid apartment I ever lived in, with far too many people. The area wasn't very welcoming, personally, but we played a lot. We had some nice gigs, and we ended up meeting Ministry and doing a tour with them. And when The Blackouts broke up, three of us went to Chicago to work with Al Jourgensen [Ministry founder and frontman].

MD: You stayed in Ministry quite a long time. Did you enjoy your time in the group and find it musically satisfying?

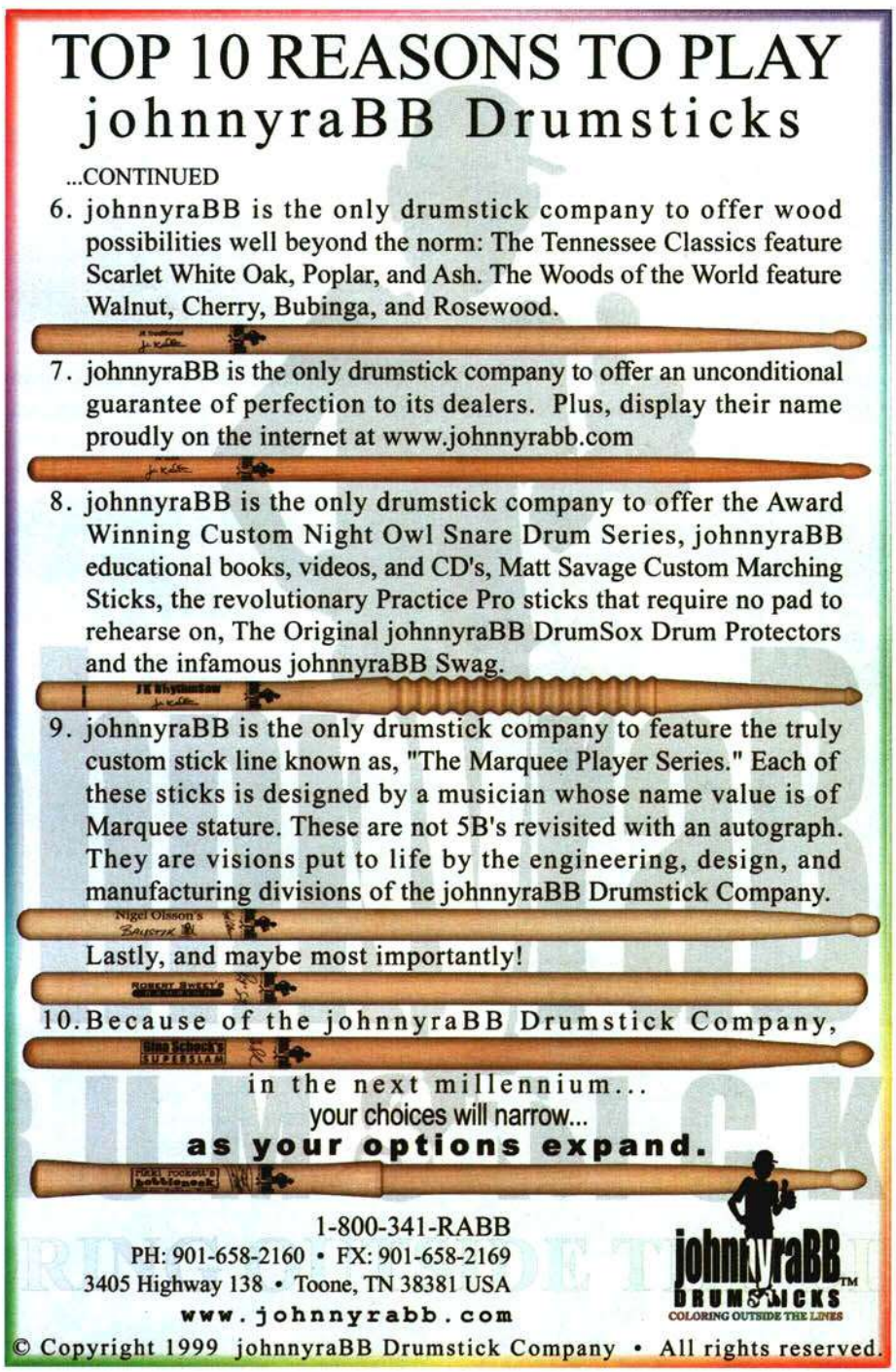
Bill: There were a lot of interesting and exciting things that happened, and there were a lot of things that weren't so interesting or exciting. In the early days there was a lot of energy, a lot going on, a lot of



opportunities to record. If I were to suggest any record that might be more reflective of me than the others, that would be *The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste.* I spent a lot of time working on that record. My memory of making it is that Paul [Barker, bassist] wasn't around much. I don't know, maybe it was depression, but he didn't seem to want to work much, and I did a lot on that record.

The other records always took three hundred years to make. I would work on them for a while until I was finished with what I was doing, and then I'd leave. The record would come out eons later and be entirely different from where I'd left it. Those things went beyond my capacity to be patient, and things weren't going particularly well within the group when I left. But a lot of the work I get today stems from the personal contacts I made during my time in Ministry, which is the most visible thing I've ever done, and I'm grateful for that.

MD: When you started branching outside of Ministry, did you find these situations refreshing and enjoyable?



Bill: To a degree. I don't have many particularly satisfying experiences, in that sense, because a lot of these projects are hard work. In a lot of ways, it's a struggle to do something really good. Actually, yeah, I think a lot about enjoying what I do, but I don't approach it from the aspect of enjoying it. I mean, I like what I do while I'm doing it—I don't mind it—but I would like to enjoy it more. Oftentimes it's just the struggle to play well, finding the right thing. I'm an outrageously picky person and I'm not easily satisfied.

MD: Does *Birth OfA Giant* reflect that?

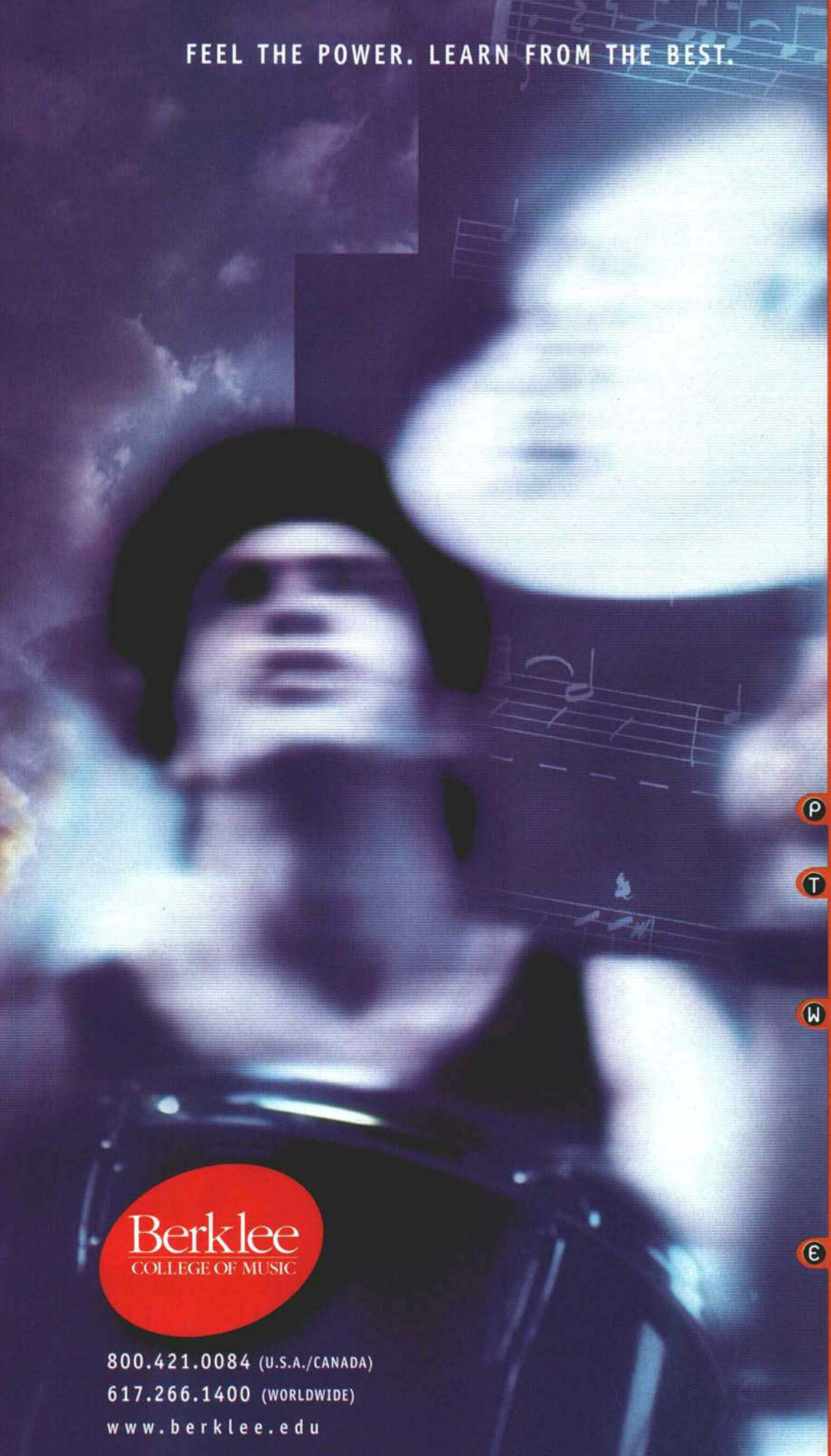
Bill: I'm sure it does. I don't think we ever got to a point of agonizing. In large part, it was a matter of problem-solving. It might have been an instance of a song needing something, and I just couldn't come up with what that something was. There's a song called "Secret Cafe" that was interesting in that sense—very difficult to complete, probably because it started with the fewest number of ideas. It was kind of an endless search, a waiting for the right idea to come along, and I didn't know where to go. So instead of doing nothing, you just start doing something, and it'll either lead you somewhere good or smash you into a dead end. I smashed into a lot of dead ends in that song.

MD: Has your style of drumming evolved over the years?

Bill: I would say it *devolved.* In one respect, you could say being the drummer in Ministry was a very functional role. There was a certain idea and aesthetic within that group that required a certain style, and it was very beat-heavy, so my playing went that way. I used to be a lot more free and improvisational. Part of what I initially enjoyed about drumming was that I could get away with murder, or at least I *thought* I could. I didn't have to play the same things all the time, like going from A to C to G-minor, like a guitar player must. I could play other things.

I think I was a busy player—too busy, as a matter of fact. And then Ministry required a different point of view, a Chris Franz/Talking Heads point of view, which is, "This is what's required. Now go for it." Chris just amazed me in how he could just do that so consistently.

Since leaving Ministry, my playing has changed a lot, and much of that has come about from that recording I made with Trey



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Gunn and Robert Fripp. I've also been working with another improvisational group in Seattle called Wound, where I have to really focus on dynamics and playing lightly. I don't have a lot of experience playing with that kind of control. My work in the past five years has primarily been focused on playing very controlled, in a very relaxed way, so the playing is really smooth. My approach was pretty much full-on all the time—just sit down and go—so it's something I have to work hard on. But it's worth looking into because there are a lot more options available.

MD: That's the first you've mentioned of working on your drumming.

Bill: I took my first real drum lessons in 1992 from the Seattle Drum School. I just realized I'd reached this wall and I wanted to get better. From that point on I've taken my playing very seriously.

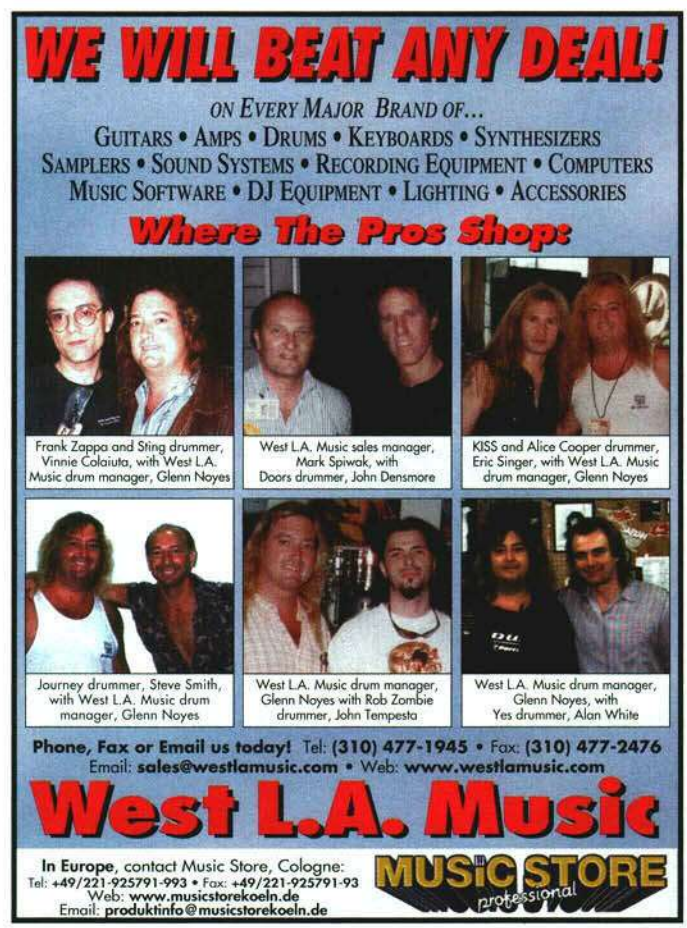
My main problem has always been that I'm an outrageously stubborn person. If I'd taken lessons ten years earlier, I would be a far different player now. I wouldn't say I *regret* not taking lessons. But I would undoubtedly have more facility and more ability, and within that I would have more choices. A lot of my approach lately has been to discover and pay attention to my weak spots. I can't speak for every drummer, but when you're talking weak spots, I think many rock drummers could go straight to the left hand. It makes sense if you think that the left hand is playing at least half the notes that the right hand is playing, just by virtue of the right hand keeping time.

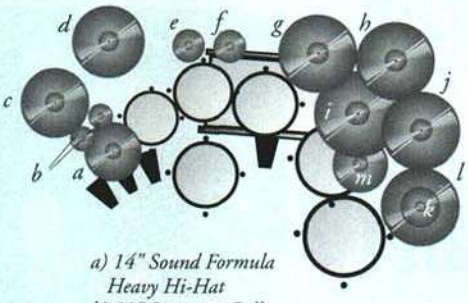
Another primary thing that changed my drumming radically is the way I sit. I wasn't really able to sit comfortably at my kit, largely because I'm a twitchy person and generally uncomfortable in my own skin. So I actually engaged in a sitting practice. That involves noticing how you're sitting, where the tension is going in your body, and how your body feels while you're sitting. Other people probably don't have to think about these things because they can sit rather comfortably. I've experimented with the height and position of the seat, and my setup changes constantly. Just recently, I pulled my seat back so that my legs are lengthened in front of me. My feet hit on the pedals at different angles, and that changes balance and the tension in specific muscles, and it changes everything on top as well.

The thing that annoys me about drumming is that there are so many variables, and how do you know what way is right? Ten years ago I could barely move my ankles—just because of years and years of playing the wrong way—and I've literally spent the last decade loosening up my ankles. I'm more comfortable now than I have ever been. I've had a couple of wonderful breakthroughs in my playing, which I credit directly to sitting properly.

I know a fellow who is a teacher of the "Alexander technique," which is a way to rid yourself of any habits of mind and body that are no longer serving you. The aim is to free your most effective reflexes, which allows a clear path to your intention during any kind of performance. It's a very practical approach to knowing your mind and body.

And if before I die I can stop making any more "drummer faces" while I'm playing, I'll die a happy man.





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g) 18" Sound Formula Full Crash
h) 18" Sound Formula Thin China
i) 20" Signature Dry Ride
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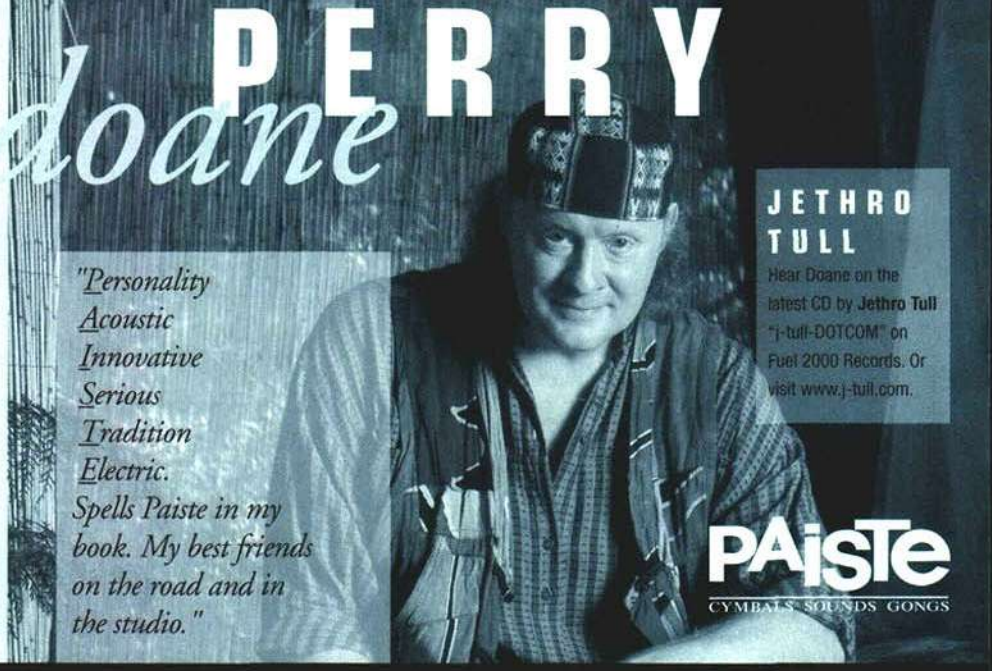

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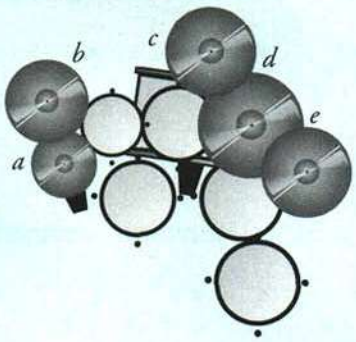

a) 14" Sound Formula Sound Edge Hi-Hat
b) 20" Signature Full Crash
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e) 20" Signature Power Ride
f) 20" 2002 Power Crash
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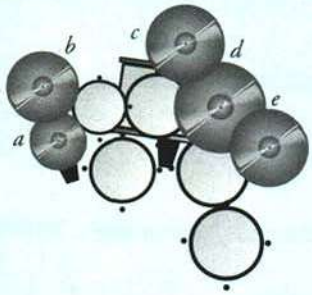
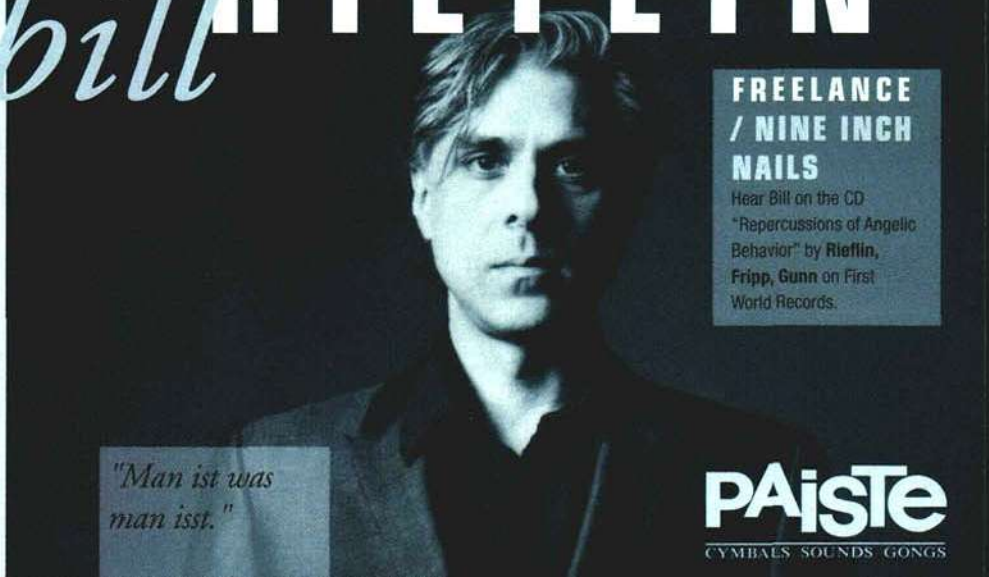


a) 15" Dimensions Thin / Heavy Hi-Hat
b) 16" Sound Formula Full Crash
c) 17" Signature Full Crash
d) 21" Signature Dry Heavy Ride
e) 18" Sound Formula Full Crash

bill RIEFLIN



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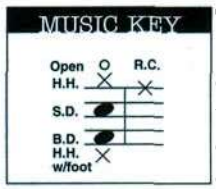
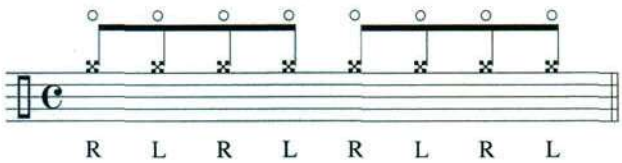
Developing The Funky Hi-Hat Part 1

by Zoro

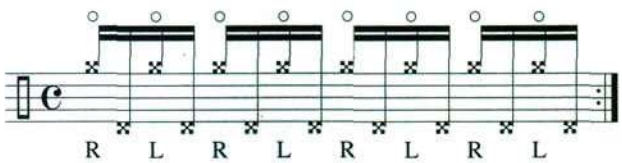


The hi-hat plays an important role in R&B music. Following are some exercises designed to help develop your ability to open the hi-hat on any partial of the measure. I came up with this concept in an attempt to develop a funkier hi-hat foot while enabling me to go for the open sound wherever I heard it in the measure.

The first two exercises have you closing the hi-hat foot on all of the "e's" and "ah's" of the measure while maintaining a constant 8th-note-sticking pattern on the hi-hat with your hands. Begin by playing alternating 8th notes (RLRL) on your hi-hats.



Now open your hi-hat at the top of each 8th note, then immediately close it on the following 16th with the hi-hat foot. If you do this correctly, you'll be playing the "e" and "ah" of every beat with your hi-hat foot while playing 8th notes with your hands.

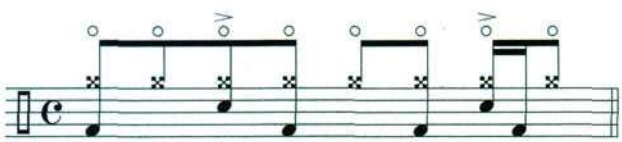


This hi-hat rhythm creates an even 16th-note flow. Once you have it down, vary the sticking pattern. Utilize some of the patterns from the first three pages of George Lawrence Stone's classic book *Stick Control* to further develop your capabilities. Just a few of the more practical stickings to be mastered are: RLRR LRLL, RLLR LRRL, RRLR LLRL, and RLRL LRLR.

Working On A Groovin' Thing

The second part of this exercise involves incorporating the previous concept within grooves. All of the following patterns are to be played with single-hand lead.

8th-Note Ride Pattern With Open Hi-Hat



8th-Note Ride Pattern With "Cleaned Up" Hi-Hat

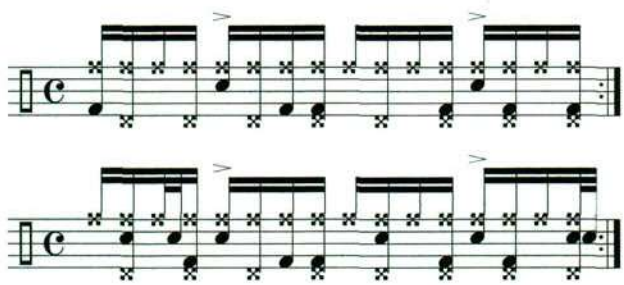
8th-Note Ride Pattern With Open Hi-Hat

8th-Note Ride Pattern With "Cleaned Up" Hi-Hat

I'm only touching on the main theme of the idea. Take whatever drum beats you already know how to play and apply these hi-hat foot patterns to them. You can also take this idea much further by applying it to any drum book that has basic beats.

The upbeat hi-hat idea works well within slow 16th-note patterns too. Check out the following two examples, where the ride hand plays 16ths on the ride cymbal while the upbeats are played with the left foot on the hi-hat.

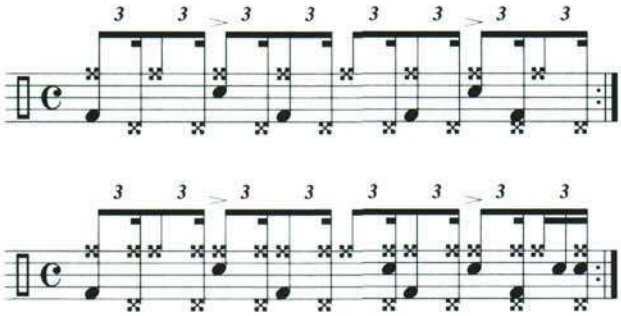
Slow 16th-Note Patterns (50-80 bpm)



Shuffle Patterns

Here's the same concept we've been working on, only now applied to shuffles. In this type of feel you play the hi-hat foot on the third partial of the triplet. The late, great Memphis drummer Al Jackson Jr., who was the house drummer for Stax/Volt records, is

the first drummer I heard doing this back in the 1960s. You can hear this on the Booker T. & The MG's song "Terrible Thing." Steve Gadd also perfected this feel and made it popular in the '70s. It's a great way to enhance the feel of any shuffle.



This article was excerpted from Zoro's highly acclaimed book, The Commandments Of R&B Drumming, *published by Warner Bros. Publications, Inc. Used with permission. (Zoro's new series of videos on R&B drumming*—Volume 1: The Soul Era, Volume 2: The Funk Era, Volume 3: The Hip-Hop Era—*is now available from Warner Bros.)*

Zoro has laid down his heavy groove for many top-name artists, including Lenny Kravitz, Bobby Brown, New Edition, Philip Bailey, Jody Watley, and Frankie Valli. For more info about Zoro, check out his Web site at www.zorothedrummer.com.

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Vinnie Colaiuta & Ross Garfield (The Drum Doctor) at The Record Plant, Hollywood CA - Photo by Josh Freese

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The "Double Pivot" Technique

Play Four Or More Notes With One Foot!

by Joshua Dyer

Many drummers have a good understanding of the basic toe pivot, where you move your bass drum foot across the pedal board to play two quick notes. But if you want to achieve anything beyond a set of two or three 16th notes, you probably think you have to use a double pedal. What if I were to tell you that you can easily get four or even *six* notes on a single bass pedal in one swift motion?

I've developed a technique that will allow you to achieve this. I call this technique the "double pivot." And it's exactly that: two consecutive executions combined into one swift motion. Essentially I've taken the toe pivot that Steve Gadd has made famous and raised it up a notch.

The easiest way to explain this technique is to break it down into its two components. The first is a forward movement of the ball of your foot on the footboard:

1. Start by placing the ball of your foot about an inch below the middle of the footboard. Execute the first two notes of a four-note sequence by moving your foot *up* the footboard. This stroke should end with your foot positioned straight, roughly at the fat part of the footboard in the center of the pedal.

I denote this motion as "F" (for forward pivot) in the musical exercises that follow. This first component has almost no difference from the toe pivot. The only real difference is that your heel stays straight instead of pivoting, which allows you to execute the second half of the technique.

2. From the finishing point of the first motion (which should be the fat part of the footboard), move the ball of your foot on an angle from the middle of the fat part of the footboard to the right edge of the pedal. Your heel should also pivot toward the right. This is to alleviate tension in your leg and maintain clarity.

I denote the execution of this component of the technique as "P" (for angled pivot) in the following exercises. Once you can combine the two motions into one *smooth* motion, you'll be able to play multiple notes on your bass drum pedal.

Developing The Technique

In beginning to teach myself this technique, I started with warm-ups that broke down the two movements, which allowed my leg to get used to the full motion. I isolated the diddles into easy patterns like the ones below.

Diddle warm-up for forward pivot ("F") isolation:

To isolate the angled-pivot diddle ("P"), simply reverse the previous warm-up:

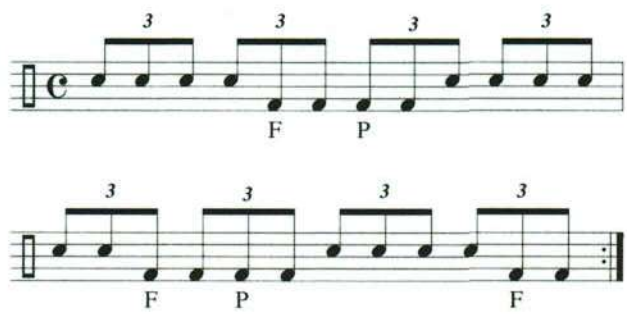
In doing these warm-ups you're still using the full range of motion. All you're doing is isolating either the first or second component of the technique.

After you feel comfortable with those two warm-ups, you're ready to combine them to form the full motion of the double pivot. At first, putting the two together may feel very rigid and a bit unusual. However, with slow and regular practice, it will become smooth and more natural.

Below are some four-note exercises that use the full range of motion. As it becomes more natural to you, the full motion becomes an arc. This arc helps you execute the notes more quickly.

Double Pivot Warm-Up:

Triplet Exercise:



32nd-Note Exercise:

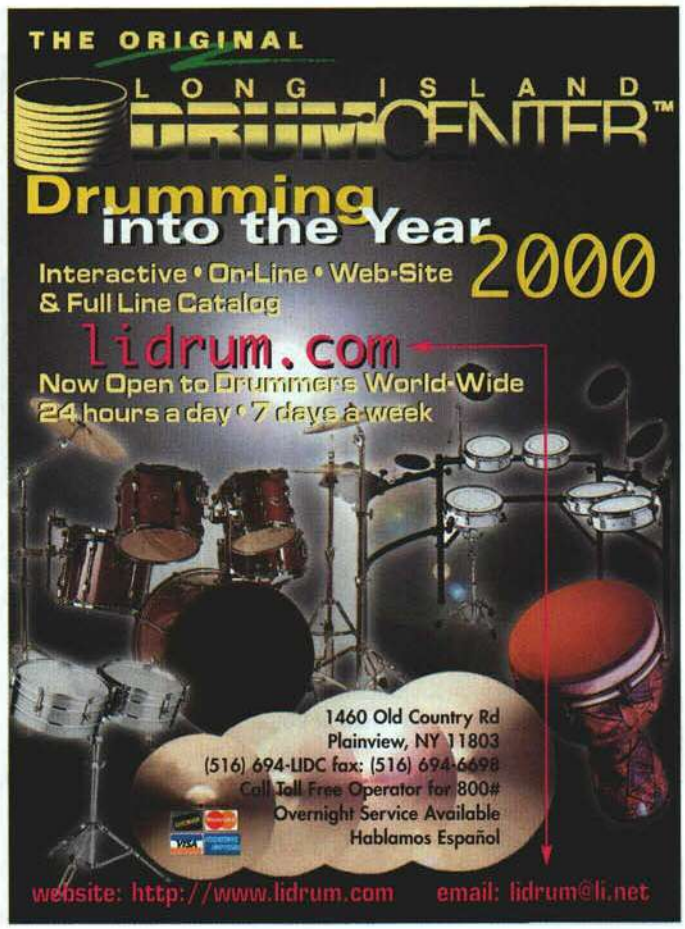
You might ask, "Why should I use the double pivot if I can achieve four 16ths or more by just playing with my heel up?" First of all, the double pivot isn't designed to play continuous notes for an extended period of time. Its intention is very similar to the toe pivot—to play a quick flurry of notes. Only instead of getting two notes in one flurry, you now have the opportunity to incorporate four or six notes.

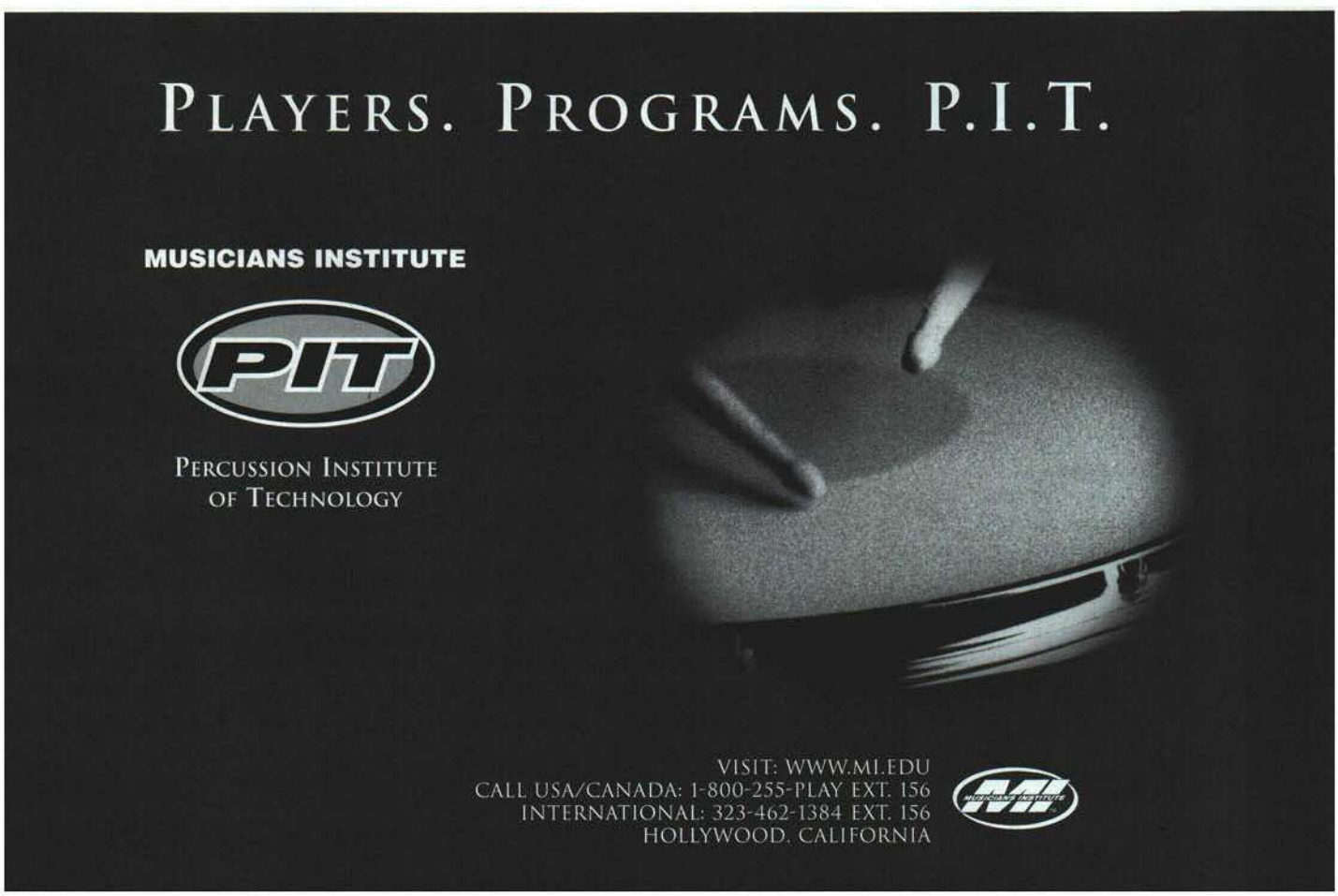
Second, you can only play just using the heel-up approach for so long before your calf cramps up and you're dragging the beat. I designed this technique so that your leg follows a natural and comfortable motion throughout its execution. Therefore, you're less likely to lose stamina, and you won't be dragging your grooves or your fills. Also, by moving your leg in a natural motion, you'll alleviate most (if not all) of the tension that builds up in your calf.

As with anything new, you should start very slowly in order to learn good habits and proper form. Incrementally click up the metronome a little each day, and before you know it you'll be able to play these exercises at blistering speeds!

Oh, and if you want to get six-note patterns out of the double pivot, all you have to do is go back to the isolation exercises and incorporate three-note groupings instead of two.

Slow practice, smooth-sole shoes, and a firm beater will put you on your way to success with the double pivot. I hope that what I've offered will expand your creativity and your palette of personal expression. Enjoy!





RECORDINGS

poor 0 rating scale 10 classic

9 Steve Smith And Buddy's Buddies

Steve Smith (dr), Steve Marcus (sp, tn sx), Andy Fusco (al sx), Lee Musiker (pno). Anthony Jackson (bs)

6 Jerry Goodman/Steve Smith/Howard Levy/Oteil Burbridge The Stranger's Hand

Steve Smith (dr), Jerry Goodman (vln), Howard Levy (hrm, kybd, ocarina, pennywhistle), Oteil Burbridge (bs)

Of these latest releases from Steve Smith's Tone Center label, one clicks instantly, and the other has its moments but doesn't reach its potential given the players involved.

Among modern fusion drummers, Smith has always had one of the most dynamic, natural feelings for swing and bebop. That shows on *Buddy's Buddies,* featuring Buddy Rich alumni. Smith sizzles as the combo pays great respect, burning through Rich staples like "Norwegian Wood," "Nutville," and Sam Nestico's "Ya Gotta Try." And it's worth the price of admission just to hear the solid grooves and musical backup Smith and the great bassist Anthony Jackson provide.

Burbridge, Levy, and Goodman are among today's most distinctive players. And perhaps with a little more time, this quartet could have gelled all the way. Some of Goodman's odd-time material is given a rote reading and sounds dated. Other songs have a forced feeling to them. "Four Four And More" is too much like a musician's inside joke without a real punch line. Fans of Smith et al will certainly find moments of inspiration, but other times when they sound like they're trying to cook in somebody else's kitchen. (ToneCenter)

— Robin Tolleson

8 Rage Against The Machine The Battle Of Los Angeles

Brad Wilk (dr), Zack de la Rocha (vcl), Tom Morello (gtr), Y.Tim.K. (bs)

Compare Rage with other hard-rocking bands that feature hip-hop flavors, and you'll discover what sets these guys apart: groove. While guitarist Tom Morello adds even more colors—including swirling psychedelia—to his vast sonic palette, *Battle's* greatest asset is the airtight rhythm section of Brad Wilk and Y.Tim.K. Without laboring, Brad and Tim lay the funkiest foundation for aggressive riffing since, well, Bonzo and Jonesy. Sure, that's a big claim, but this is one *helluva* good album. "Mic Check," for instance, features Wilk's loosest, most "get-down" drumming on record. Though his sound changes a bit throughout the LP, it's distinguished by a tight, ringing snare and the same beefy bass drum sound that graced *Evil Empire's,* low end. And despite those groovy ghost notes, *Battle* is still as heavy as a sack of bricks. (Epic)

— Michael Parillo

8 Simon Phillips Out Of The Blue

Simon Phillips (dr), Andy Timmons (gtr), Jeff Babko (kybd), Wendell Brooks (hn), Jeff Watts Jr. (bs)

For years Simon Phillips has produced complex yet melodic fusion that is attractive both to the musically educated *and* the untrained ear. This well-recorded live set contains the best material from Phillips' previous solo recordings. Simon's classic licks are on display throughout, with a drum-heavy mix including a subsonic kick drum that can be felt for miles. And his solo on "Indian Summer" shows that his double bass chops and polyrhythmic concept are as sharp as ever. In line with a small handful of other composer/bandleader/drummers in electric jazz, Phillips continues to inspire by constantly furthering his writing, performing, and recording skills. (Lipstick [import] 192 41 37 193, available from Audiophile Imports, [908] 996-7311)

— Mike Haid

8 311 Sound System

Chad Sexton (dr), Nick Hexum (vcl, gtr), Tim Mahoney (gtr), P-Nut (bs), SA Martinez (vcl, DJ)

Omaha's rapping funksters are back with another distinctive effort. As usual the beats-

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Mitch Mitchell has livened up two contemporary blues records recently. *Dark Of The Night* by guitarist Scott Holt features Mitch's patented loose but itchy style alongside Jimi Hendrix Experience bandmate Billy Cox on four tracks. **Derek Wiseman** and Double Trouble's **Chris Layton** get down and dirty on four cuts each as well. **(Paul Leim's** drum loop on "Crosstown Traffic" is unfortunate, though.) *Tendure's Dream* by guitar whiz Tendure also features Mitchell and Cox (and also recalls Hendrix in more than just rhythm-section personnel). In fact, it's their first full-length together in thirty years. (EMC, available from CD Now and Amazon.com)

Jose Medeles leaves many drummers of the caffeine-guitar-pop world in the dust on 22 Jacks' *Going North.* Relentless energy *screams* off this disc. To Medeles' credit, he doesn't let the high temperatures burn away his subtleties. A very strong performance. (SideOneDummy. www.side1.com)

Frank Beard may have his detractors, but ZZ Top's brand-new *XXX* sure doesn't give any clues why. Yeah, it sounds like a whole lot of electro-tinkering went on here—but not necessarily in the drum grooves, where Beard sounds like he's having a ball slapping big, beautifully human fills all over The Top's MIDI-swamp style. Great fun. (BMG)

If you still have your tree and stockings up, you should definitely track down *Holiday For Percussion* by **The University Of North Texas Percussion Ensemble.** With imaginative arrangements penned by students in Robert J. Schietroma's percussion arranging class, the pieces feature traditional and non-traditional, pitched and non-pitched instruments in a setting that is truly recommended listening for *any* season. (Drop 6 Media, PO Box 81, Denton, TX 76202, [877] 77-DROP6, info@drop6.com)

Todd Harrold Band's *Mr. Whatever* showcases drummer Harrold in several lights—he's a fine funk drummer, clever songwriter, and pretty decent singer too, bringing Boz Scaggs to mind. (Wall Street, [248) 647-8270, www.wallstreetmusic.com)

Correction

In the "Significant Others" section of the September 1999 *Critique,* the contact information for the Montreal Drum Fest highlights disc was incorrect. The phone numbers are (450) 928-1726 and (450) 651-4257.

per-minute are high, but there's plenty of variety in the group's attack. *Sound System* further refines 311's formula of coliseum-ready material: trance-like melodies and rhythmic rap floating above the grinding drums, bass, and guitars. A powerful groove player, Chad Sexton is all over the half-time reggae of "Strong All Along," opens "Sever" with a crisp funk flourish, and shows off some impressive Latin stickings on "Life's Not A Race." He grounds the group's most manic moments with soulful beats, albeit with odd tunings. Sexton's snare is wound super-tight, often sounding like a 10" accessory model. His kick is more attack than tone, and it really drives the band. Bass and drums rule 311, and Sexton shines. (Capricorn)

— Robin Tolleson

8 Samael Eternal

Xy (dr, programming, kybd), Vorph (vcl, gtr), Masmiseim (bs), Kaos (gtr)

Switzerland's Samael have progressed considerably since the early '90s, when they played raw yet ferocious black metal. On their eighth release, *Eternal,* the quartet links wildly orchestrated and highly melodic electronica, industrial, and Euro-pop to their crunching metal foundation. While doing so, the bold drumming and keyboard/programming work of songwriter Xy are pushed way out front. The opening track, "Year Zero," recalls the mechanistic iiber rock of Rammstein, as Xy's electronically enhanced hi-hat and snare establish a brawny marching beat. During the overblown "Together," Xy moves from a brief blitzkrieg of flams to slow, ominous pounding that meshes curiously with Vorph's alien vocals. And during "Ways," you might start dancing in a strange way, as techno drumming mingles with mysterious synth passages. On *Eternal,* Samael sounds more spellbinding than ever. (Century Media)

— Jeff Perlah

7 Matt Wilson Quartet Smile

Matt Wilson (dr), Andrew D'Angelo (al sx, bs cl), Joel Frahm (tn, sp sx), Yosuke Inoue (ac & el bs)

Bold and spontaneous, Wilson's world mixes edgy modern acoustic jazz with dashes of Ornette, Dolphy, and Groucho. As the title implies, wacky humor abounds. But the playing is no joke. Wilson's sideman role with Dewey Redman proved him to be a serious, swinging kit man. On his own discs, he pushes the envelope further with odd interpretations ("Strangers In The Night") and a fearlessness that spans the heady and raw. This drummer means every note he plays, whether it's bluesy, bashy quarter notes or nimble uptempo cymbal work. The well-cast quartet is firmly on the same wavelength. Even when they're blowing "free," as in "Go Team Go!," the group takes it somewhere *together.* Expect surprises and a long career from this exciting drummer/leader/idea-man. (Palmetto)

— Jeff Potter

6 Alice In Chains Music Bank

Sean Kinney (dr), Layne Staley (vcl), Jerry Cantrell (gtr), Mike Inez. Mike Starr (bs)

Bookended by two brand new tracks, the three-CD box set *Music Bank* spans Alice In Chains' career. Avid fans will drool at the previously unreleased demos and studio cuts. More casual listeners will be interested to hear the group evolve from Poison-ish newbies to the assured unit that now rules the moody, mid-tempo branch of hard alternative rock. Sean Kinney develops along with the band. Early on he was a remarkably assured "big fill" drummer, juicing up straightforward beats with flashy licks every bunch of bars. In time, though, Kinney's playing has become more nuanced and thoughtful. Like the band itself, he's stripped down his approach, getting more distinctive with his tom beats and cymbal accents. A long way from the garden-variety hard-poppers they once were, Kinney and the gang are now of one mind. (Capitol)

— Michael Parillo

7 Days Of The New

Days Of The New 2

Travis Meeks (gtr, bs, vcl, dr), Matt Taul, Max Maxwell, Gary Shields (dr), Nicole Scherzinger (vcl), Brian Vinson (bs), Ray Rizzo (perc), Pete Peterson (orch arrang)

If Travis Meeks gets hit by a bus, the moody, ambitious post-grunge "band" Days Of The New loses all: vocalist, arranger, producer, guitarist—and a damn good drummer. Mind you, we also should give credit to Matt Taul and Max Maxwell, who get jumbled in the liner notes. But *Days* is clearly Meeks' show. While Travis can't do much to escape his Harry Chapin-meets-Eddie Vedder vocal style, he takes pains to vary drum feels. Lots of atypical phrasing here—for example, a long string of accents on the "&" of each beat, displacing the backbeat for an eternity. Meeks' playful, confident drumming adds life to this album of diverse influences. (Outpost/Universal)

— T.Bruce Wittet

FROM THE EDITORS' VAULT

Rediscovering drumming's dusty gems

10 Rod Stewart

Every Picture Tells A Story

Mick Waller (dr), Rod Stewart (vcl, ac gtr), Ron Wood (gtr, bs, pedal steel), Pete Sears (pno). Martin Qoittenton, Sam Mitchell (gtr), Ian McLagan (org), Danny Thompson, Andy Pyle (bs), Dick Powell (vln), Ray Jackson (mandolin)

Little Feat mastermind Lowell George once sang about "perfect imperfection." This album defines that concept. The pinnacle of Stewart's career, *Picture* is unrivaled among British rock in terms of soul, spunk, and emotional depth. Drummer Mick Waller's sloshy thumping on "That's All Right," "Maggie May," and the title track feels so good you completely forgive his *just* missed cues on the latter. (He wasn't alone: Rod's vocal ad-libs guaranteed the performances wouldn't get stale.) And then there's Mick's hair-raising performance on the Temptations' "(I Know) I'm Losing You." It simply takes the song to a higher level than the brilliant original version even hinted at. What say we trot out a cliche: "classic."

— Adam Budofsky

8 Mike Stern Play

Dennis Chambers, Ben Perowsky (dr), Mike Stern, John Scofield, Rill Frisell (gtr), Jim Beard (kybd), Lincoln Goines (bs), Rob Malach (tn sx)

The material on *Play* allows Perowsky and Chambers to illustrate the inherent relationship between swing, funk, and New Orleans-style shuffles. The tracks are loose, funky, and swinging. Both drummers demonstrate excellent "highly involved" grooves that allow their personalities to be heard without interrupting the music. There is much to be learned from listening to how these guys interpret the arrangements in a musical and unselfish

manner. Perowsky plays on most of the tracks, displaying well-controlled dynamics and great cymbal technique. Chambers handles the two heaviest tracks along with "Goin' Under," a short, floating swing piece. Both drummers show sensitivity *and* power throughout this outstanding release. (Atlantic)

— Mike Haid

8 HIM Sworn Eyes

Doug Scharin (dr, perc, bs, samples), Bundy K. Brown (bs), Rob Mazurek (cor), Jeff Parker (gtr), Jolie Liu (vln), Martin Perna (al sx)

Sworn Eyes is yet another soundscape-defining document from the brave folks at Perishable Records. Drummer Doug Scharin's HIM project blends live drumming with impossibly programmed parts, layered over rich guitar, subtle, melodic trumpet, marimbas, tablas, and even a sole shaker. Scharin connects all facets together with a deft touch and trance-inducing production.

Although polyrhythms and rhythmic modulations abound, the competing parts are much more independent than on many contemporary electronic/live projects. The result is a brilliant combination of studio wizardry and live playing that feels good and sounds fresh. Scharin's methods prove that, if placed opposite some heart and soul, a "stiff element can work beautifully. *Rich* music 'tis. (Perishable, PO Box 57-8804. Chicago, IL 60657, info@perishablerecords.com)

— Ted Bonar

7 Continental Drifters Vermilion

Russ Broussard (dr, perc), Susan Cowsill (gtr, mandolin, vcl), Peter Holsapple (gtr, kybd, banjo, vcl), Robert Mache (gtr), Vicki Peterson (gtr, vcl), Mark Waltoo (bs)

Although The Continental Drifters are made up of ace songwriters from some of the '80s' smartest urban pop/rock bands (Bangles, Dream Syndicate, db's/ REM) they now have one foot planted firmly outside city limits. The earthy grooves and ghost notes of drummer Russ Broussard round off the edges of songs that could become plodding in the hands of a lesser player. Broussard's Louisiana roots, honed by years with Zydeco legends Terrance Simien and Buckwheat Zydeco, shine through the loping "Meet Me In The Middle," where the inventive groove comes from riding on the rims. Elsewhere Broussard gets muscular without running over the band's delicate balance. Like The Faces before them, The Drifters understand how star players can let their personalities loose without overpowering the brilliance of the songs. (Razor & Tie)

— Linda Pitmon

7 Anthony Hindson And Friends It's A Curious Life

Gary Husband, Tony Williams (dr), Zakir Hussain, Vikku Vinayakram (perc), Anthony Hindson (gtr), Jack Bruce (bs, vcl), Scott Thunes (bs), Shankar (vln), John Good (fl), Mark Robertson (kybd), Deborah Winters (vcl)

This record is an inspiration and a lesson in musical cross-pollination. Hindson plays thirteen-string guitar over a fascinating blend of progressive rock and Indian classical music that is filled with many percussive pleasures. Hindson met and befriended the likes of Zakir Hussain, Shankar, and the late Tony Williams while studying at the Ali Akbar Khan School of Music in California. They all contribute to *It's A Curious Life,* particularly Hussain. It's *Zakir* who keeps the groove steady on "Sunjog Variation" as Tony inhales, subdivides, and conquers the rock groove. And Gary Husband has the feeling, time, and cranium to beautifully smooth out Hussain and Vinayakram's challenging odd times. (Wind In Hare Music. PO Box 886, San Anselmo, CA 94979, [415] 721-7360)

— Robin Tolleson

VIDEOS

6 The How To Of Udu

featuring Brian Melick

level: beginning to advanced, $24.95

The Udu drum is an intriguing percussive tool. This hollow clay drum, originally from Africa, sounds like a marriage between an Indian tabla and a slide trombone. The percussive and melodic possibilities seem limitless, but where to begin? Newcomers will be glad to know about *The How To Of Udu.* Brian Melick demystifies the technical aspects and demonstrates how to "bend, pull, and draw" sounds out of this ceramic bulb. In several performance sections Melick shows that the sonic range and tonal variety of the drum are astounding. I wish the sound mix had been a higher priority, though; the drum levels are way too low. And even a *brief* sketch of the Udu's Nigerian roots would have been appreciated. Its spooky sounds make one think there *must* be an African tradition that would be worth sharing. (Interworld)

— Bill Kiely

BOOKS

9 The Essential Drumset Method by David Carol-Libman

level: intermediate to advanced, $19.95 (with CD)

The Essential Drumset Method is an outstanding presentation of exercises that will improve a drummer's dexterity around the kit. The wonderful first section offers

Kickin' Out The New

6 Laying it down on the rock duo Cork's *Speed Of Thought,* former Mountain drummer **Corky Laing** never fails to inspire listeners to emulate his simple, clean, no-frills style. Sitting so far back in the pocket, he instantly defines rock 'n' roll. But Laing also sets the backbeat swinging, particularly on "Genuine," with a heavy accent on the 1 and a fat bass drum sound. This style may fall in and out of favor according to trends, but it never fails to kick your butt. (Lightyear)

7 **Mike Sipple** of Jimmie's Chicken Shack is the linchpin of his band's eclectic sound. Always in sync, on *Bring Your Own Stereo* the multi-faceted Sipple expands the Shack's musical range with his versatile style. On "Lazy Boy Dash," he opens with a standard jazz 4/4 swing beat, shifts into a hip-hop thump, then moves to a reggae groove before sliding back into the jazz beat—all with consistent verve. Sipple invests his energies in paying attention to song structure, rather than filling up space with fancy fills. The payoff is an amusing rhythmic carnival. (Rocket/Island)

6 An extremely talented thinking drummer, **Mike Levy** proves he's the driving force of Portable on *Secret Life.* Accentuating the upbeat on "Boy-Girl," Levy makes great use of a natural-sounding drumkit as he syncopates the snare, rides on the toms, and throws in quick 32nd-note fills. The tribal groove is the whole basis of this song—almost like a drum solo. (TVT)

— Fran Azzarto and Lisa Marie Crouch

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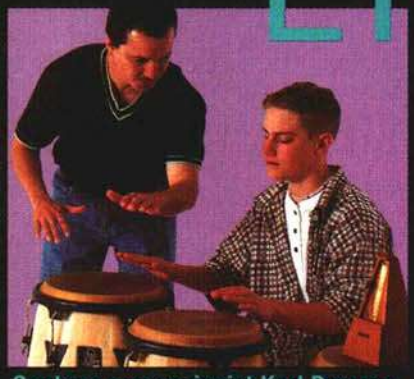

"I'm gonna play like this guy some-day"

Santana percussionist Karl Perazzo.

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numerous alternate-sticking triplet exercises that will inspire intermediate students to spend hours of practice time on them. The most advanced drummers will benefit as well. Even though every exercise is written for alternate sticking patterns on a five-piece kit, the book presents limitless possibilities for soloing or filling. Much of the text also concentrates on groupings of five, seven, and nine, and the author tackles this daunting subject with ease. Follow the simple instructions, and suddenly you'll have the facility to play what once seemed unattainable. Jazz students looking to improve their "fours" or solo phrasing *need* to check this material out. An excellent CD is also included, with quick, sharp playing of every exercise in the book. (Mel Bay)

— Ted Bonar

5 The Drum Cadence Book For High School Marching Bands

by Joe Maroni

level: beginner to intermediate, $4.95

The Drum Cadence Book is written for the most basic marching percussion section: snare drums, trios (three multi-toms), four tuned bass drums, and cymbals. Its twenty pages contain five warm-ups, ten cadences, four roll-offs, and four halts. Most of the pieces are in 2/4 time and are exactly 32 measures long, except for the roll-offs and halts, which are, appropriately, only four measures each. The rhythms are simple—16ths, 16th-note triplets, a few five- and nine-stroke rolls, and some quarter-note triplets. Although the book does not come with individual parts, each piece is on one page (no awkward page turns!), so every member of the drum line can read the music from an individual copy. The somewhat outdated material may be better suited for junior high bands. Beginning drumset players would find these pieces a good exercise in coordination and reading skills as well. (Mel Bay)

— Lauren Vogel Weiss

9 The World Of Flams

by Dan Tomlinson

level: Intermediate to advanced, $14.95

Holy flam, Steve Gadd! Dan Tomlinson's *The World Of Flams* may be dedicated to you, but it should be read by every drummer. Within these 81 staple-bound pages is the most comprehensive book on the flam one could imagine. Tomlinson starts out with his new and unique classification for flams—all six types. Then he goes on to explain, in an intriguing and humorous way, the evolution of the flam, grace-note guidelines, and grace-note spacing.

Now let's dig in! The exercises include sticking, tempo markings, and accents, and they range from four to seven per page. The first 39 pages cover everything from quarter notes and septuplets...to drumset fills for rock and jazz...to the rudimental flam exercises in the original standard American drum rudiments...to Swiss-army triplets. The remaining lessons focus on rock, jazz, funk, and Afro-Cuban applications for the drumset. Overall, the progression is smooth and very methodical. This stuff might get pretty complex and overwhelming, but imagine what you could do if you added it to your repertoire. Tomlinson has written an instant classic (Batman)! (Warner Bros.)

— Fran Azzarto

7 Fun With Bongos

by Trevor Salloum

level: beginner, $6.95

It may be true that most Americans first learned of conga drums from *I Love Lucy,* and that the TV debut of bongos was on the *Dobey Gillis* series. But while those shows are long gone and Latin percussion has joined the mainstream, bongos and congas are still too often treated as exotic furniture or stage props rather than as serious instruments.

Want to learn the basics on your bongos? *Fun With Bongos* offers a very clean, no bells/no whistles approach to buying, tuning, and truly "playing" them. And you needn't speak Spanish in order to learn the basics—a little time devoted to proper stroking technique, to reading/playing a few essential Latin rhythms, and to mastering the "martillo" groove will transform a bongo "owner" into a bongo "player." (Mel Bay)

— Bill Kiely

Madness Across The Water

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Toto *Livefields.* A two-CD set of Toto recorded live in France in March 1999, featuring original lead singer Bobby Kimball back in the group, with Simon Phillips on drums. The second disc is enhanced with live footage of the band in Japan.

Jonas Hellborg/Shawn Lane *Zen House.* Jonas Hellborg, Shawn Lane, and Jeff Sipe (Apt. Q258) recorded live in a rare acoustic setting. This intense trio's musicianship is downright jaw-dropping.

Kazumi Watanabe *One For All.* Japan's premier guitarist, recorded live in NYG in March 1999 with Larry Coryell, Mike Mainieri, Akiko Yano, John Patitucci, and Mino Cinelu on drums and percussion.

Jeff Richman *The Way In.* LA-based guitarist Jeff Richman along with Frank Gambale, Steve Lukather, Al DiMeola, John Abercrombie, Jeff Berlin, Gary Willis, and Vinnie Colaiuta playing some hard-hitting fusion.

Steve Morse Band *Stand Up.* Steve Morse, Jerry Peek, and Rod Morgenstein with special guests Eric Johnson, Peter Frampton, Albert Lee, T. Lavitz, Mark O'Connor, and Alex Ligertwood rock the house on this half-instrumental, half-vocal adventure.

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Ethan Hartshorn

Twenty-six-year-old Ethan Hartshorn was born and raised in Pittsburgh. He attended Indiana University, where he studied with Kenny Aronoff and performed with David Barker, Rufus Reid, and The Al Cobine Big Band. He also won the Indiana University Performer's Certificate.

Since moving to New York in 1996 Ethan has been freelancing in a variety of musical styles. He's recorded with pop/rock artists like Theresa Sarea and Gregg Swan. (Swan's song "Spinning" was recently featured on the TV show *Homicide* and rose to #18 on the Gavin charts.) He's played with folk band Stickman Jones and blues group Blues Jones. And he's done countless jazz, R&B, and wedding-band gigs. Not content to stay at home, Ethan has also performed in Japan, England, Ireland, Monaco, and various parts of the Caribbean.

Ethan's demo tape reveals him to be a drummer of taste and expressiveness, lending support and color to the work of singer/songwriters like Sarea and Swan. But his tape also includes a *killer* swing tune, on which Ethan demonstrates some impressive solo technique.

Ringo Starr, Keith Moon, Art Blakey, Al Jackson, Jimmy Cobb, Roger Humphries, and Roger Ryan are among Ethan's influences. He passes those influences on through the lessons he teaches at his drum school in Brooklyn. He performs on various drumkits depending on the situation, including a Tama Starclassic, a 1959 Ludwig, or a Roland TD-7, with a variety of cymbals, hardware, and percussion.

Ethan's goals are straightforward and simple: to do more session work, and to see the projects he's involved with become successful.

Jesse Smith

As an infant, Jesse Smith bashed on everything he could find. By eight, he'd focused on the drums. After years of drum lessons, school band rehearsals, and diligent practicing, Jesse was introduced to what he calls "the power and complexity of heavy metal."

Jesse moved from his native New Jersey to Hawaii at the age of seventeen. While saving to buy a double bass drumkit, he studied players like Tommy Aldridge, Scott Travis, Nick Menza, and Mikkey Dee. By the time he moved to Seattle at the age of nineteen, he was ready for the band scene. After jamming with many bands, he ultimately joined Saqqara, an established group looking for a new spark.

In October of 1998 the band recorded a self-titled CD. Jesse's drumming is mixed very up-front, showcasing his technical, articulate style. The tracks include melodic tom phrasing, intricate cymbal work...and lots of raw power. They were cut on a Tama Artstar II kit, mounted on a Gibraltar rack. Jesse also used (and endorses) Sabian cymbals, Kit Tools drumsticks, and Aquarian heads.

Saqqara has been filling Seattle rock clubs regularly, and they recently opened for former Skid Row singer Sebastian Bach. Their album has received major airplay on the city's rock station, including three months as the station's most requested work by a local band. (Info on the band is available at www.saqqara.bizland.com.)

Jesse looks forward to landing a record contract with Saqqara. In addition, he says, "I want to work closely with a few manufacturers on R&D for new instruments. I want to expand on the art I love: playing drums."

Ralph Tosoni

Ralph Tosoni may be one of the hardest-working drummers you've never heard of. Since 1993 the twenty-eight-year-old has been a member of Fishnet Stockings, a Swiss rockabilly trio. The group has spent the past ten years recording and touring, primarily in Europe and Australia. Their two studio and two live recordings sell well in Europe, generating excitement for their high-energy live shows.

Despite the Swiss nationality of its members, Fishnet Stockings' music is influenced by early American and English rock 'n' roll and rockabilly artists like Carl Perkins, Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent, and Buddy Holly. They've added the power and energy of more contemporary rock to create their own style—largely fueled by Ralph Tosoni's drumming. Focusing on the simplicity required by the rockabilly style, Ralph still manages to infuse the band's music with his own background in metal drumming.

Ralph plays and endorses GMS drums, Paiste cymbals, and Agner drumsticks. His goals are tied to those of Fishnet Stockings. They look forward to releasing some of their tracks on future rockabilly compilations in the US, along with recording another studio album. A tour of the southeast and southwest US is scheduled for March of 2000. Information can be obtained from www.fishnetstockings.com.

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move,* send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove. NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

The Ugly Mugs, circa 1993

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inside PIT

Story by Rich Watson

Photos by Alex Solca

A few days ago I was listening to a drummer friend's demo CD. It was an ass-kicking progressive metal band with a couple of scorching guitarists. When I complimented their playing, my friend replied, "They went to Musicians Institute." With that simple declaration, my friend figured he had fully explained *why* the guitarists were lighting up the track.

While nothing replaces a nailed audition, the name "Musicians Institute" does carry weight in the music biz. Now celebrating its twentieth anniversary, The Percussion Institute of Technology (PIT)—which along with schools for guitar (GIT), bass (BIT), keyboards (KIT), vocals (VIT), and recording (RIT) comprise Musicians Institute—has earned a reputation as a trade school that produces results. (See the PIT Alumni sidebar on page 142.)

During one heady year straddling '83 and '84, I gained firsthand knowledge about the "weight" of an MI education. All of my sweat and tears—not to mention most of my time—were poured into PIT. That year had a profound and lasting impact on my playing.

As I learned on a recent trip back to MI, the school has changed over the years. It's dramatically outgrown its original digs overlooking Hollywood Boulevard. Much of the curriculum and faculty are different. And yet a fire in the belly of at least some of the students and instructors reinforce my time-gilded notions of what PIT was—and *is*—all about.

The More Things Change...

To get a modern perspective that was truly "inside" MI, I collared a few students for their take on the MI experience. A couple of them complained about the school's being in "Hollyweird." Jeff Bowders, a drum student from Salem, Oregon, disagrees.

"PIT couldn't be in a better place," he asserts. "Hollywood is scummy—there's no doubt about it. There's stuff you have to put up with, like transvestites chasing you down Hollywood Boulevard. You're not going to see *that* in an MI pamphlet, [laughs] But it's just really cool to say, 'I'm a musician, going to a musician's school, in a musician's Mecca. I'm really *in* it.'"

I singled out Jeff from among the forty or so PIT students partly at random, and partly because from outside his practice lab his solid groove and solo chops suggested that he was a serious student. Since our first interview, Jeff has graduated from MI and relocated to Nashville to make his mark on the studio scene.

"You're really in the midst of the music in LA," he continues. "The Catalina [club] is just a couple of blocks away. And the Baked Potato opened up another location

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"For some new students, what's realistic is what they see on MTV. But within the first six months at PIT they're saying, 'Oh my god, I didn't know drumming was so involved.'" — Maria Martinez

down there too. Weckl, Chambers, Novak—all those fusion guys play down there. One night I was practicing in my lab, and a student poked his head in and said, 'Hey, Weckl's playing down at the Catalina.' So we just walked down a couple of blocks and watched Weckl burn. Then we went back to our labs and thought, Why are we even here? That happened to me on a couple of nights. Being right in the center of the action is really cool and really inspiring."

Though still in "scummy" Hollywood, MI's evolution is immediately evident in the new real estate it occupies. The original Musicians Institute, which opened in 1976, was shoehorned into a single-floor facility above a Hollywood souvenir shop. Soon after PIT opened in 1980, dozens of practice-obsessed drummers vied for a handful of marginally air-conditioned practice rooms around the clock. (There was a lot of funk coming out of those drum rooms back then, but not all of it made you want to dance.)

The "new" MI commands an entire three-story building. Much more civilized, it has forty-nine climate-controlled drum labs, each equipped with a five-piece kit, stands, and a cassette listening module. Drummers need bring only cymbals and a kick pedal. "No one can say they can't find a room now," insists PIT department head Gary Hess. "We make sure there are no excuses not to practice."

The much-improved library houses curriculum materials, including classes on audiotape. There's also a vast selection of recorded music and concert and instructional videos, as well as videos of seminars and concerts held at MI. An in-house video lab features numerous stations with practice pads for drummers and instrument input jacks for guitarists and bassists. In a dedicated synth lab, keyboards and electronic drumkits run direct into a 32-track recorder.

Standouts among MI amenities are two state-of-the-art recording studios. Two separate control rooms share a large, dedicated sound studio for standard session-type recording. For live-performance recording, they are also linked to MI's 500-seat concert hall, which has its own professional-quality light and sound systems. This flexible setup facilitates audio recording and multi-camera videotaping of student performances.

"Every student can walk out with a demo CD," Hess points out. "Learning how things are done in the studio in a hands-on way is an invaluable experience when the students are actually out there doing a session gig."

Improvements in curriculum and organization are perhaps less flashy, but at least as significant. "The school has gotten more career-oriented over the years," says Hess. "In addition to the recording facilities, we have more career-planning and music-business seminars, such as publicity and marketing, A&R, and music production. We also cover more angles of music that today's drummers are apt to face, such as programming and sequencing, which are taught in the drum high-tech classes."

"On a more general level, there's better coordination between the various instrument programs and the levels of the material being studied," adds Maria Martinez, who has seen the school evolve over the eighteen years she's been a PIT instructor. "For example, the bass and keyboard students work on the same Latin styles as the PIT students. That gives them the opportunity to work together on new concepts to reinforce their comprehension. It also makes the process more enjoyable—and more musical—than learning in isolation in a practice lab."

Maria Martinez "making it happen" in a Latin drumming class as students tap out the rhythms on practice pad tables

One change that initially disappointed

PIT Alumni

Dave Beyer (Melissa Etheridge)
Curt Bisquera (Bonnie Raitt, Mick Jagger)
Patrick Buchman (Mike Stern, Frank Gambale, Anggun)
Matt Laug (Alanis Morissette)
Scott Mercado (Candlebox)
Takashi Numazawa (Chaka Khan, Bobby Womak, 13 Cats)
Chad Smith (Red HotChili Peppers)
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Scott Travis (Judas Priest, Fight)
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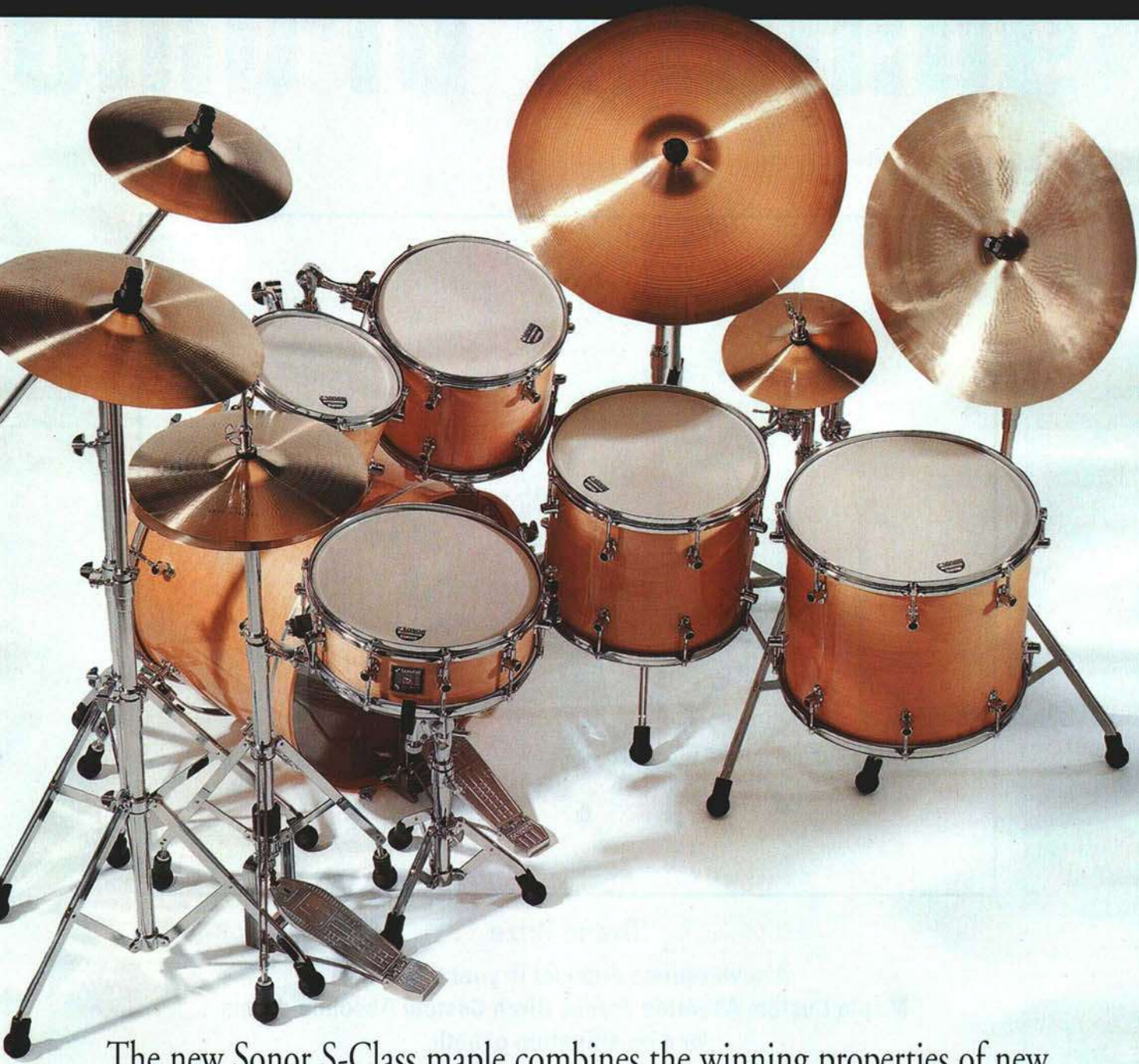

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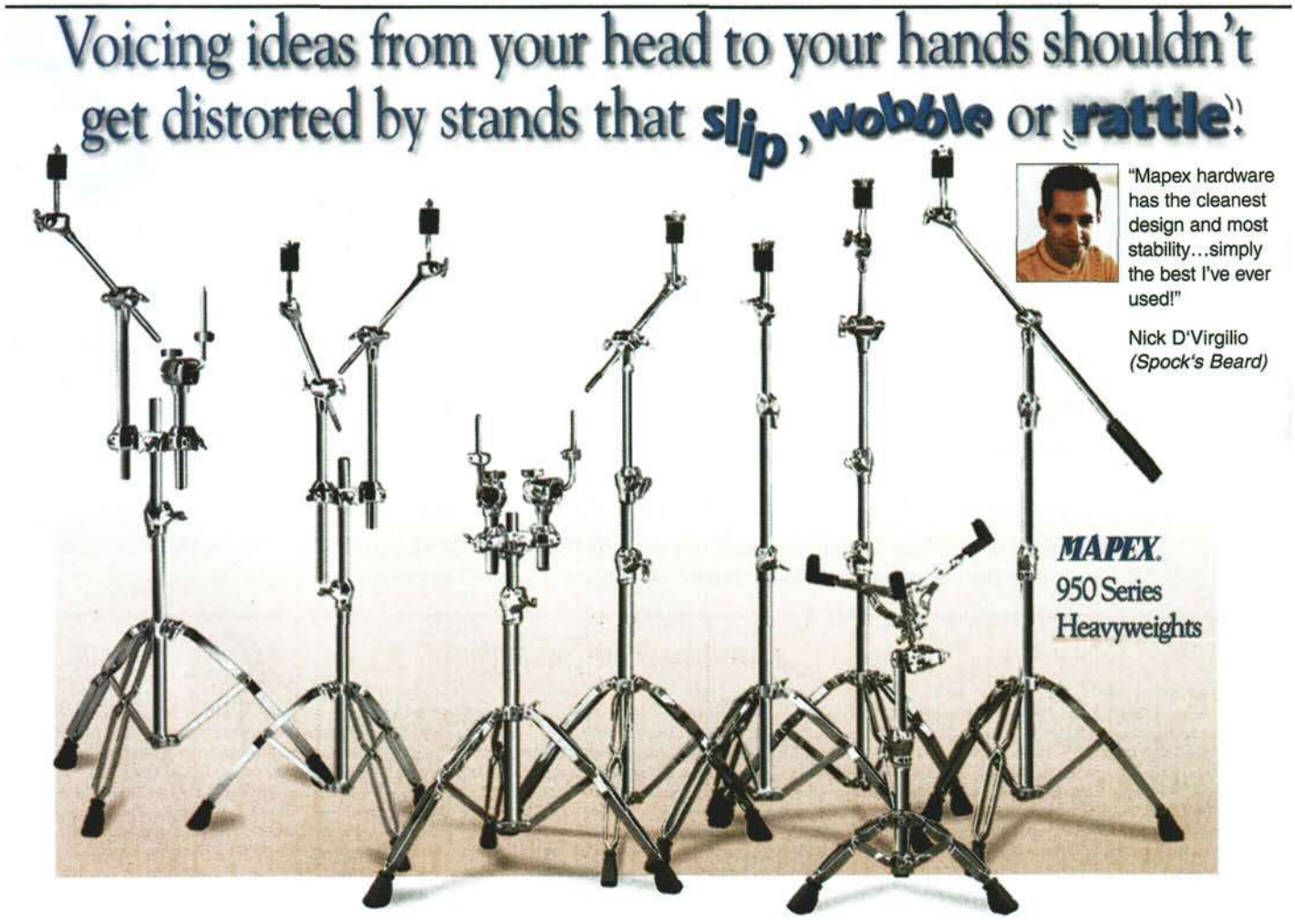
Inside PIT

A PIT student jammin' in a drum lab

Jeff Bowders was the departure of instructors Joe Porcaro and Ralph Humphrey while he was making plans to attend MI. "But I was really excited that Ray Luzier was on the faculty," Jeff volunteers. "Ray conducts the hard rock LPWs [Live Playing Workshops] and a double bass class. I knew him from his work on some albums on the Shrapnel label, which mostly spotlights shredder guitar virtuosos. He's one of the main reasons I ended up going to MI.

"As it turned out, I learned a lot from *all* of the teachers. Tim Pedersen is a consummate rock drummer. Maria Martinez has such a depth of knowledge and an incredible feel on all the Afro-Cuban and Brazilian stuff. And you can tell that she really cares about her students. Eddie Roscetti's a genius. On top of his killer odd-meter playing, he taught me about the music business and dealing with people professionally. And then there's Ray [Luzier]. He was unbelievably kind, and he taught me a lot. It was great getting instruction from so many different angles, with so much experience to back it up."

"The best players don't always make the best teachers," Gary Hess explains. "It's a different set of skills. And some of the marquee players we had in the early years were on the road a lot. They weren't around to teach on a steady, week-to-week basis. We've spent years assembling a faculty who are solid players with plenty of gigging credentials—*plus* they're excellent teachers who are committed to being there for MI students. In the long run, that conti-



nuity is valuable to the student-teacher relationship." (Speaking of continuity, Gary Hess was PIT's very first enrolled student back in 1980.)

PIT gets additional star power from its Master Artist Series, which brings in noted players to teach on a regular, periodic basis throughout the year. Last year's crew included Horacio Hernandez, Gary Chaffee, and Steve Houghton. This year's expanded eight-person roster includes Horacio, Steve, Will Kennedy, Dave Lombardo, Ricky Lawson, Kirk Covington, and Virgil Donati.

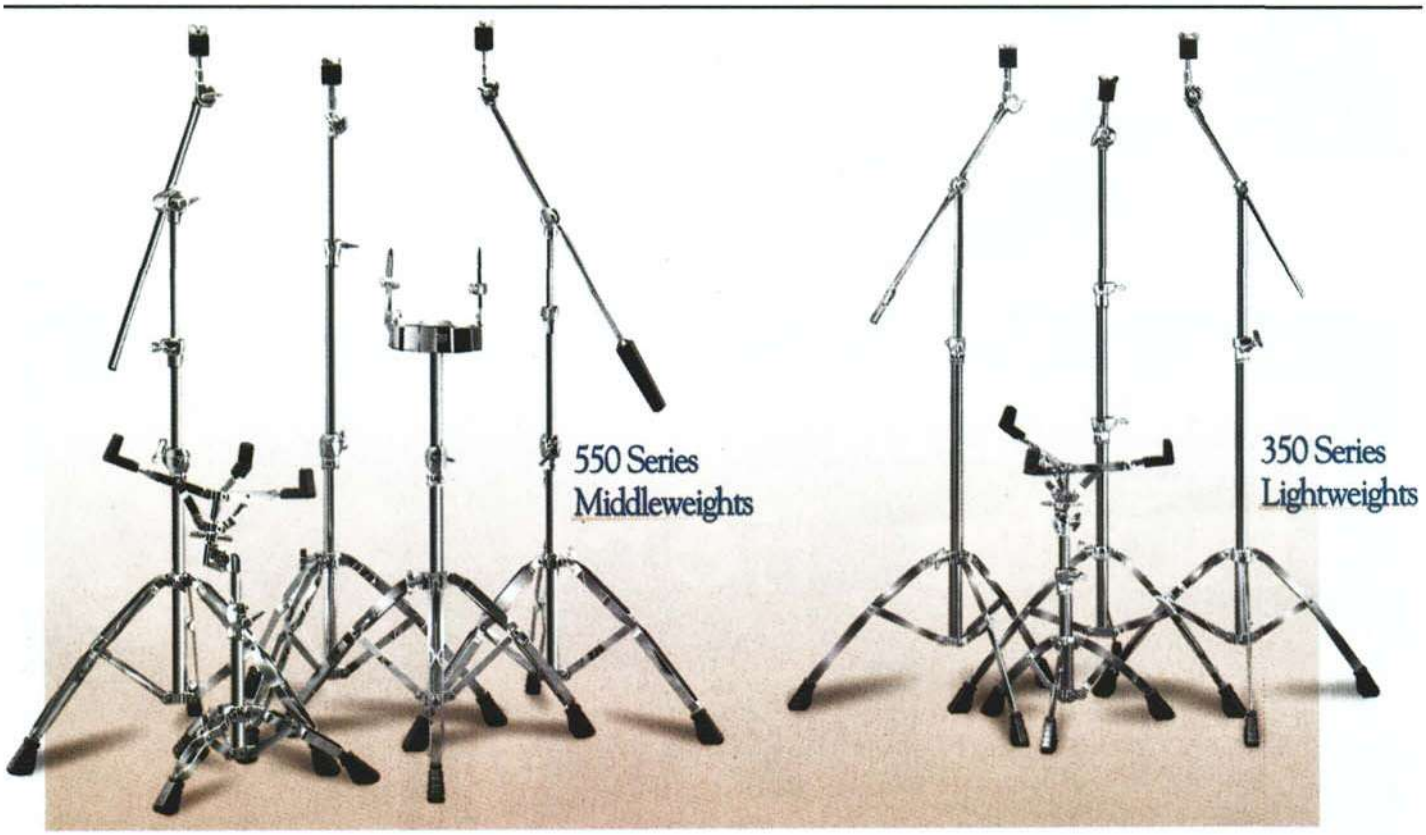
And for even more sparkle, MI also hosts clinics and concerts with the most revered players in the world. Drumming artists who have appeared over the past few years include Alex Acuna, Gregg Bissonette, Terry Bozzio, Bill Bruford, Dennis Chambers, Billy Cobham, Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Gadd, David Garibaldi, Jonathan Moffett, Rod Morgenstein, Neil Peart, Simon Phillips, Steve Smith, Chester Thompson, and Chad Wackerman.

Steve Houghton providing some "hands-on" suggestions as a PIT student performs with a visiting big band

The PIT Student Profile

While the majority of MI students come from North America, PIT's reputation has spread to aspiring drummers worldwide. The school commonly draws students from all over Asia, South America, Europe, Africa, and Australia. This cosmopolitan environment provides broad cultural and musical perspectives to students and teachers alike.

"There were two Brazilian drummers in my class who were *so* good," recalls Jeff Bowders. "Feel is everything to them. Their playing isn't sloppy, but isn't dead-



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Professional Program

- Six months long.
- Continues private instruction, LPWs, and course electives.
- Greater emphasis on artistic development.
- Opportunity to record in state-of-the-art studios.
- Classes include ensemble techniques with seven-piece "horn band," playing techniques, reading, odd meters, and Latin drumming.
- LPWs include fusion, R&B, and hard rock.

Commercial Program

- Six months long.
- Continues private instruction, LPWs, and all electives.
- Concentrates on developing a career strategy with private career counseling and classes on music business, songwriting, and recording.
- Each student produces a personal CD showcasing his or her playing, writing, and arranging skills.

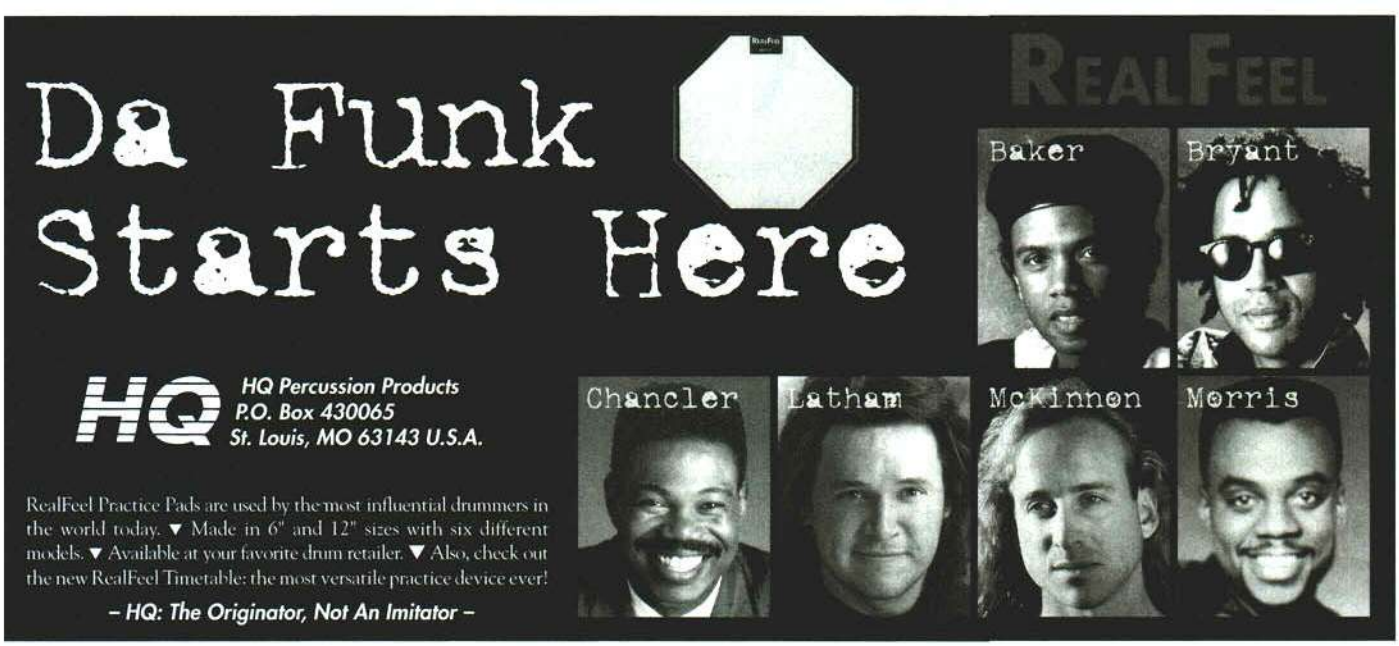
Encore Program

- Ten weeks long.
- Intended for drummers with less time or a more specific musical or professional goal.
- Private lessons and individually coached performances.
- Choice of MI classes, including those from the vocal (VIT), keyboard (KIT), and recording (PIT) programs.

on, either. It's just so un-mechanical and musical. I was watching one of them play, and I asked, 'How do you *do* that?' He said [with an accent], 'You just *play,* man, you just *play!'* After spending some time with them, I was able to pick up some of that feel. In how many towns across America can you experience that?"

Although their backgrounds are diverse, many US students have their sights set on playing rock. A few more of the Asian and European students are into jazz. "Our program is diversified enough to make anybody happy," assures Hess. "Whether they want to focus on Latin, heavy metal, alternative, or whatever, we can accommodate them. Even for drummers who come only wanting to play rock or alternative, it's never a waste of time. In spite of any preconceptions about styles they want to play, by being exposed to all different kinds of music, they become better musicians."

"At PIT, students quickly learn that someone didn't wake up one day and invent, say, hip-hop or alternative," notes Maria Martinez. "They learn that much of today's pop evolved from other styles. We connect students with the source so they can base their own playing on those foundations rather than a watered-down version. That builds their confidence as musicians for playing all material—yesterday's, today's, and tomorrow's—because it allows them to make specific, informed musical choices. Without that kind of foundation, you're never really sure about what you're doing. Between the day that the students walk into the school for the first time



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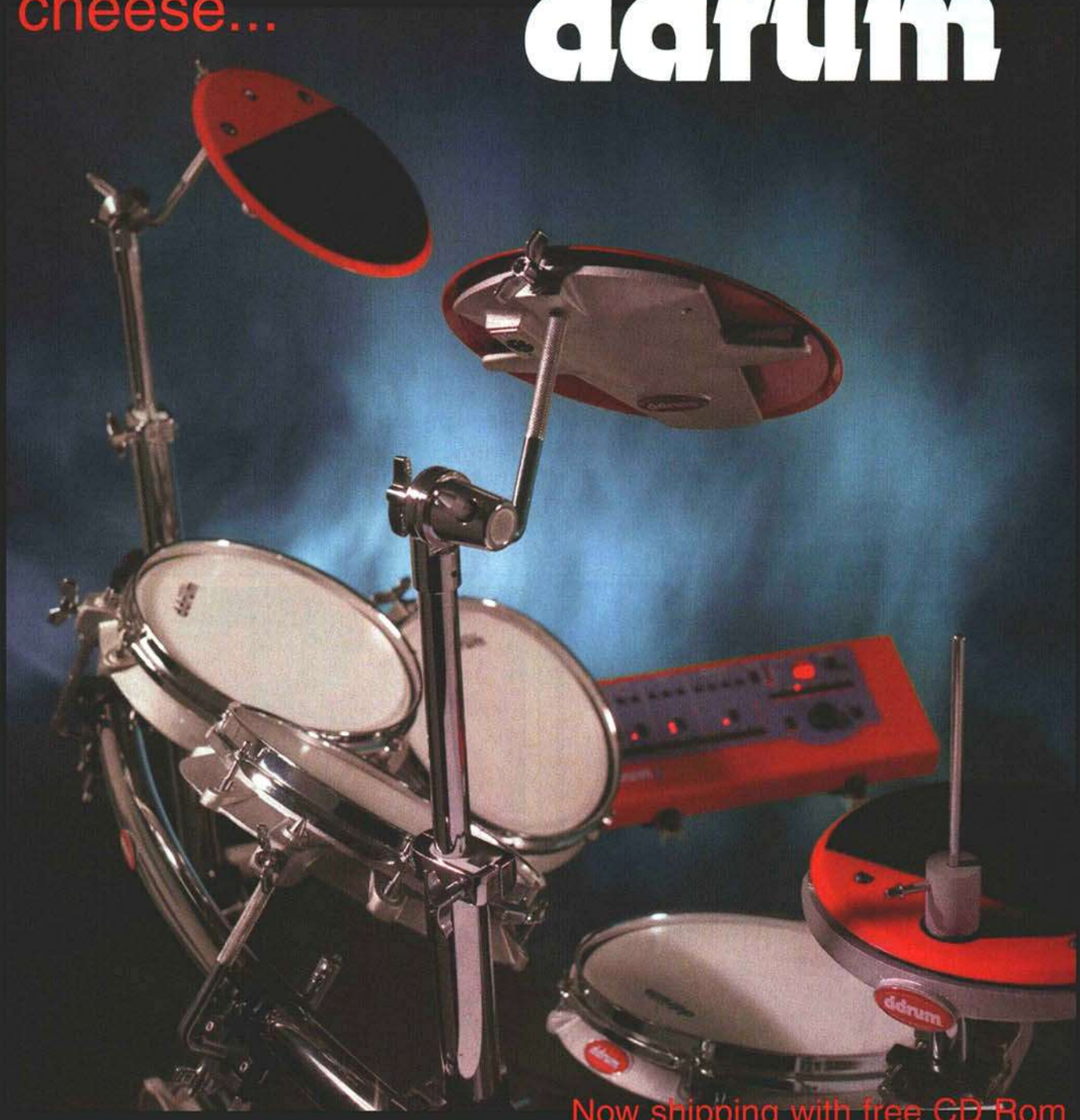

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and the day they leave, they become very different people."

Stylistic versatility is key. But far from homogenizing its students, PIT encourages exploration of individual interests and preferences with a wide variety of electives. The current list includes funk drumming, Brazilian and Afro-Cuban percussion, Essential Styles (based on Steve Houghton's book of the same name), drum high-tech, hand percussion, African drum ensemble, double bass drum, the "Latin/funk connection," jazz listening, and Music Minus One (which involves playing with sequences). Among many other general electives offered to all MI students are classes on composition, arranging, lyric writing, scoring music for TV & film, style and analysis, advanced improvisation, and vocal proficiency.

"In terms of career goals, very few of our new students come in with the idea of becoming studio musicians anymore," comments Hess. "Most want to work with a band, rather than become a well-rounded musician capable of playing all styles so they can work with *many* bands."

MI has responded by adding numerous band-based programs, including a band clinic program that gets musicians together, as well as several new songwriting and music business classes. But such adjustments to the curriculum never replace MI's bottom-line objective of making students musically proficient and *employable* for the broadest possible range of gigs.

Maria Martinez notes that some students enter PIT with unrealistic expectations. "For some new students, what's realistic is what they see on MTV. But within the first six months they're saying, 'Oh my god, I didn't know drumming was so involved.' They reach that conclusion because the teachers here tell them the truth. We don't do it to burst their bubble. We just give them a reality check."

Jeff Bowders recalls witnessing the impact of that "reality check" on some underclassmen. "The first week, a lot of players were walking around the halls like zombies from getting blasted by all this new information, saying, What is going *on?* Some got discouraged, some even quit. But the guys who stuck it out and tried to soak up as much as they could.... Man, it was totally inspiring to see how much they'd

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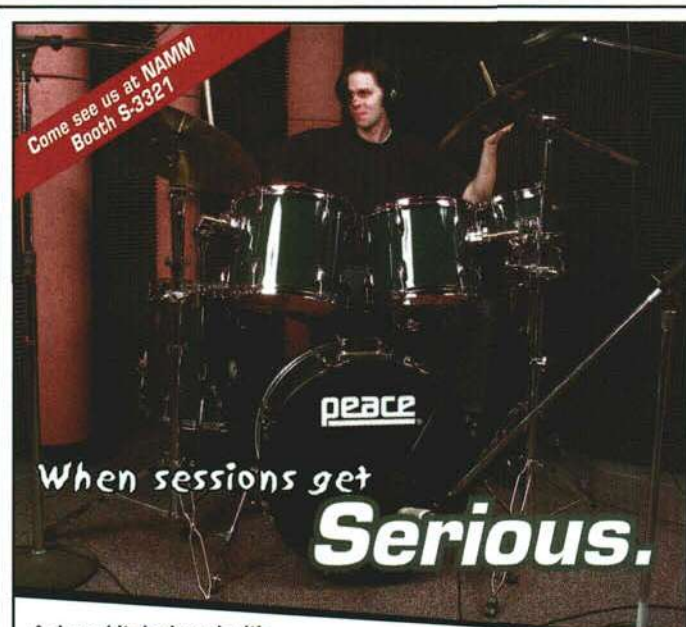

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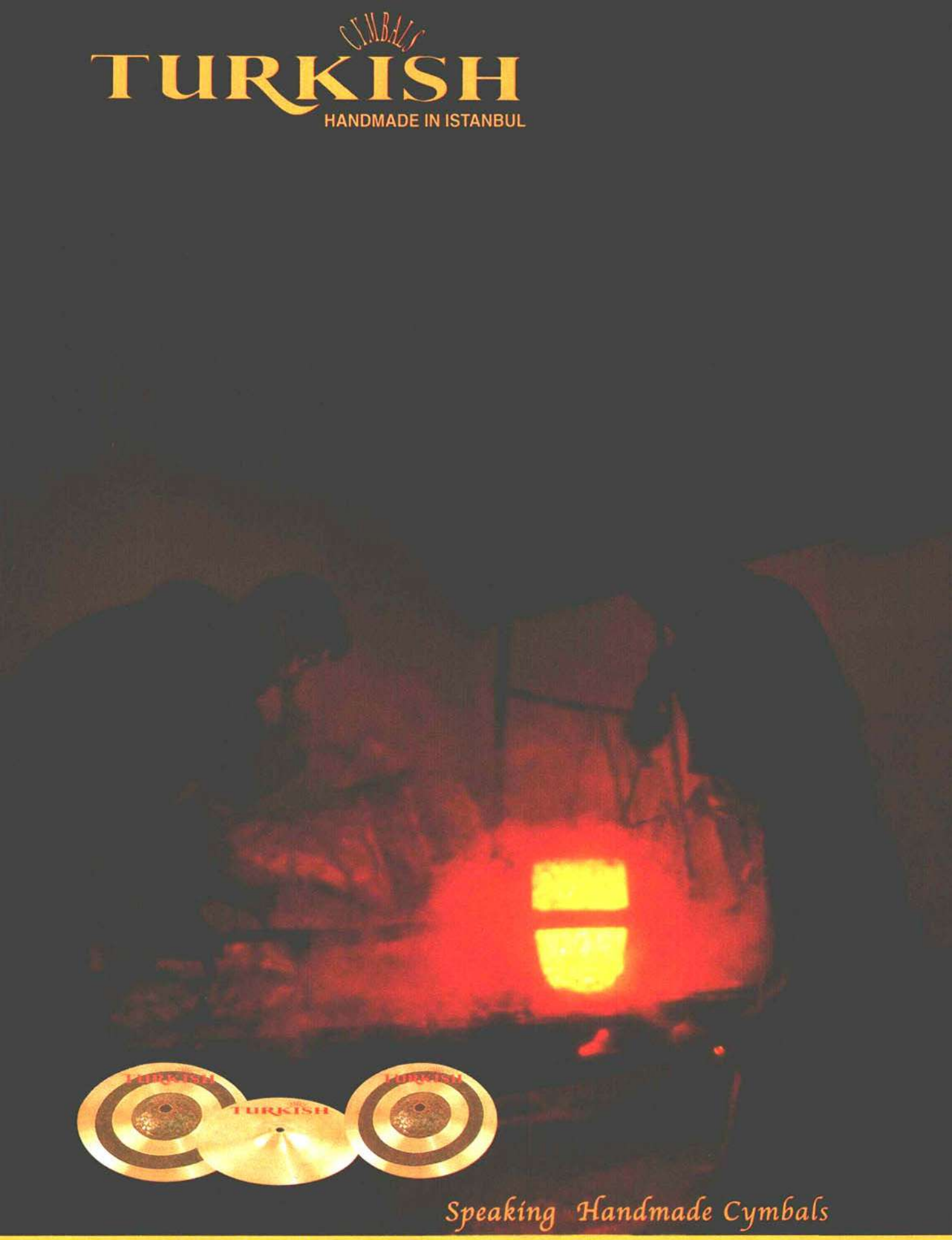

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improved after three or four months! That's when you can see that *the school is working."*

Boot Camp

A couple of PIT students admitted to feeling overwhelmed by the amount of information presented to them. Gary Hess and Maria Martinez confirm that this is a common reaction, especially for the students who enter MI right after high school.

How tough is MI? Well, it's not the Navy Seals, but *no one* will skate through a PIT program unchallenged. Although all regular classes are held during the day, many students have to put in some wee-hours woodshedding to stay on top of the curriculum. MI is open twenty-four hours a day Monday through Friday, and from noon until 8:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday. This practically round-the-clock access is provided for students' individual practice, as well as jamming and rehearsing with their bands.

In addition to putting in the time, benefiting from PIT depends a lot on attitude.

"You have to be open-minded," Jeff warns. "You can't go in there telling the

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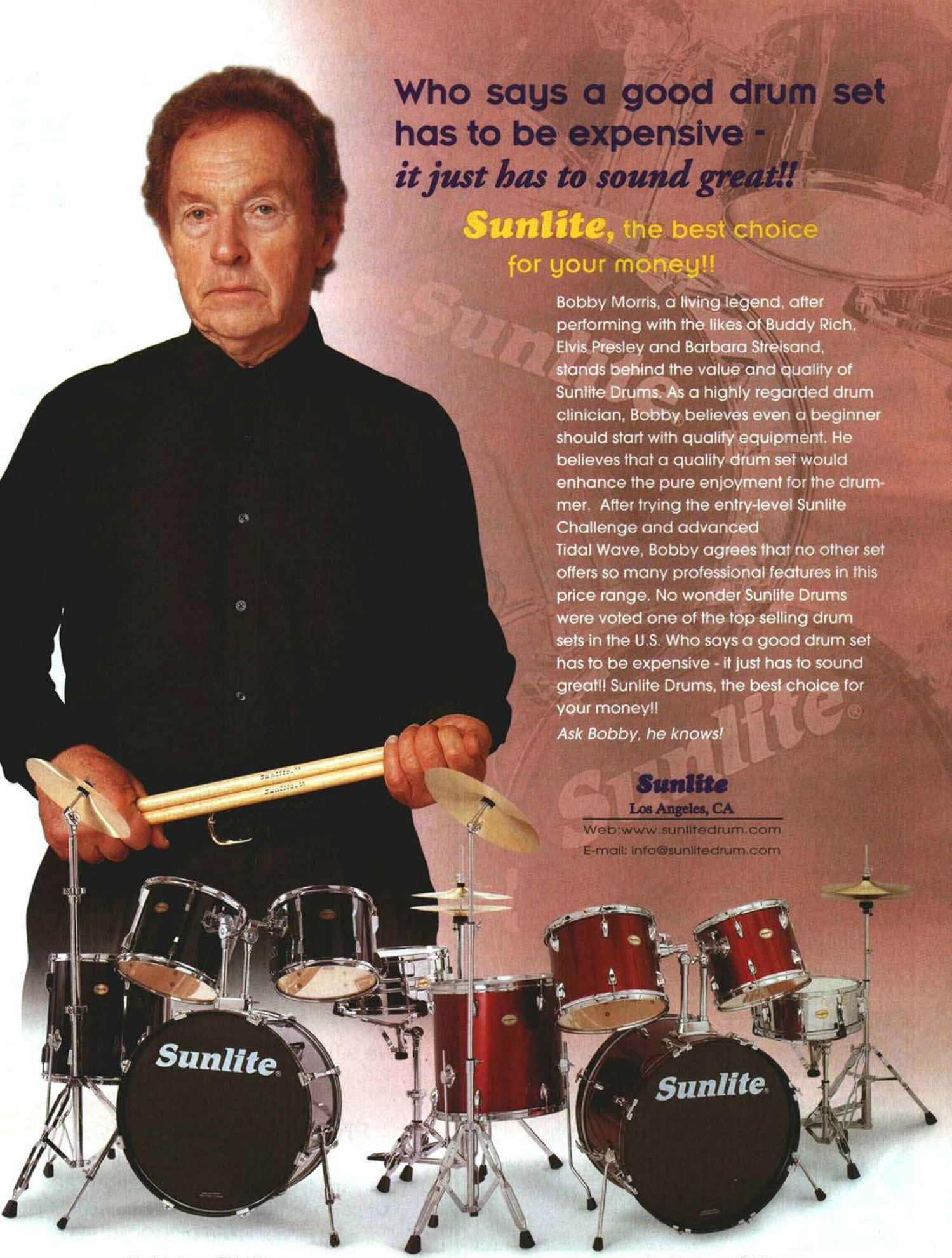


Model shown: Tidal Wave

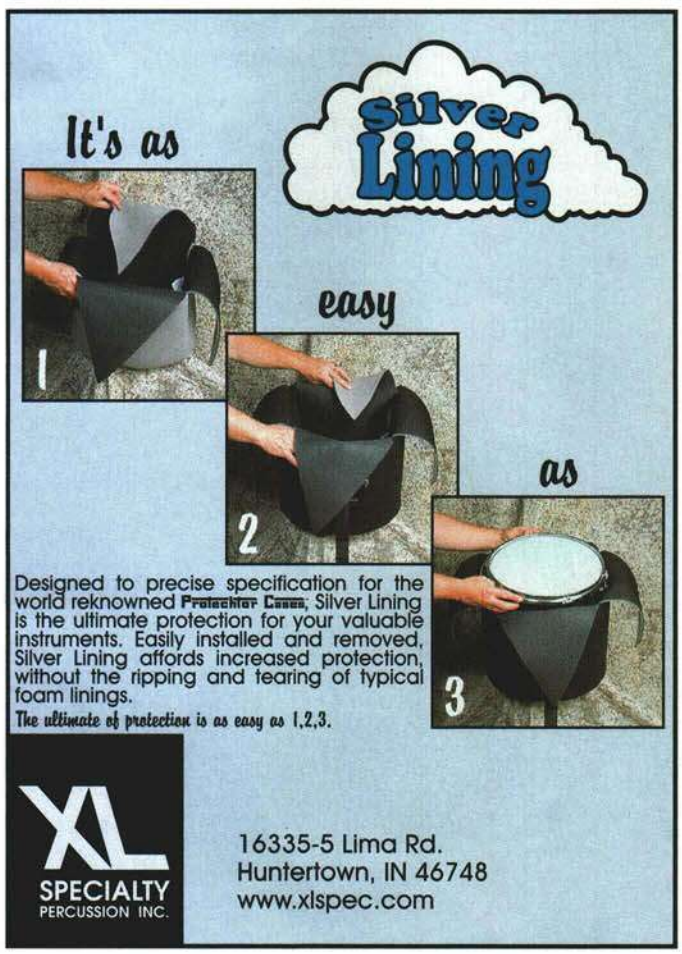
Model shown: Challenge

Students developing their recording skills in MI's state-of-the-art studio

instructors, 'This is how I play, and every day I want you to tell me how good I am.' That's not going to work. There are a couple of teachers who are brutally honest. But that's what you're paying for. Would you rather have a teacher just tell you what you're doing right, or someone who gives you both the high points and the low points? That's how you get better.

"Tim Pedersen is *very* meticulous about his instructions," Jeff continues. "If you don't get it right, he's gonna bury you. And Gary Hess—the tyrant [laughs]—he expects a lot from his students. I don't know anyone who wasn't affected by him in a positive way. But he doesn't just hand out compliments. It was a good day at PIT when Gary said you did good.

"Then there's Steve Houghton. When Steve came in, he made us feel like little school girls. Steve assigned me this *burnin'* jazz chart. I said, 'You gotta be kiddin', man.' I knew he'd be on top of every little thing I missed. But I worked on it, and when I started playing with the band, he was right there next to me, goin', 'Yeah, okay, you're doin' good.' Afterward he said, 'You missed a few things, but that was really good. Good



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effort.' It was so weird, because he'd scared the crap out of us for the first few weeks, but in the end he was being so positive and supportive. And then his compliment meant a lot more than someone who's always telling you you're great."

One place students know not to go for ego-stroking is the Real World LPW, which is taught by piano player Roger Burn. "Roger has an incredible book for a rhythm section and three horns," explains Gary Hess. "Guys come into the class, and Roger throws a chart in front of them, and it's '1-2-3-go.' It's on-the-spot, just like you'd encounter at a casual, or even in the studio. He's there to look for weaknesses in your playing and preparedness. 'Real World LPW' is exactly the right title for the class."

Maria Martinez adds, "Roger will tell the student, 'This chart calls for brushes. Oh, you don't *have* brushes? You're fired!' Or if the student reads down the chart and then messes up the ending, Roger will say, 'Hey, this isn't working. If you don't know what the figure is, work it out before we start the tune. Send me another drummer.'

"It seems hard-core, but it's no different from what you could face in the real world of professional drumming. It's as if you're on a TV program or a recording date. It's sort of like boot camp. It's an eye-opener. But the students go *in* with the idea that they're going to get stung—we warn them—and Roger *will* find something to sting them with. Often he'll reenact a situation he actually saw at his own gigs. The idea is to learn it here, instead of at a gig where you really have something to lose."

Despite the occasional "brutal honesty," Jeff confides that the only time he got discouraged had nothing to do with the PIT instructors. "I was in Ensemble Techniques, which is an LPW where you play charts with a three-piece horn section. I'm not the best jazz player by any means. That music really wasn't my priority at the time, so the first couple of weeks I didn't practice the charts enough. But when I performed in class I really sucked on it. I knew I could do better, and I knew the *instructor* knew it, too. So I said to myself, You better get up to speed here, buddy, or you're going to get eaten alive. But that was pressure I put on myself, and it ended up being a really positive learning experience."

Get With The Program

In PIT's early days, aside from a preparatory summer course, MI offered a "one-size-fits-all," one-year session. Over the years, the choice of programs has been expanded dramatically to better accommodate players' individual needs. (See the PIT Programs sidebar on page 148.) These range from a brief, non-certificate intensive to certificate and degree programs. Some programs help students cut directly to their area of interest. Others open up the entire universe of music and drumming. All feature weekly one-hour private lessons where each student's progress is monitored and special help is provided.

Although students are expected to purchase a few books, most of the various courses' study material is provided for free on carefully planned lesson handouts. Much of it is based on acclaimed method books written by instructors Gary Hess, Maria Martinez, Chuck Silverman, and Steve Houghton.

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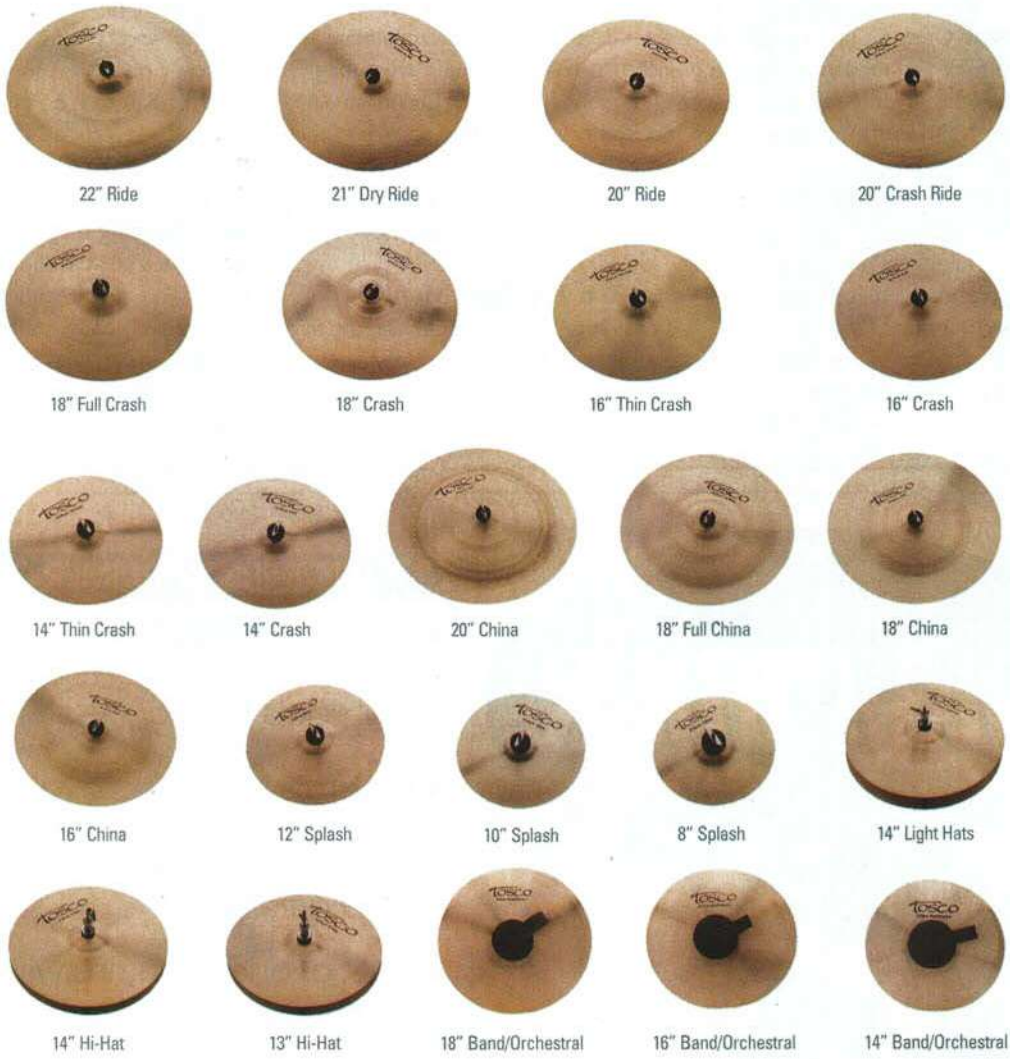

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Inside PIT

To maximize the efficiency of the curriculum, PIT's basic, non-degree education is divided into six-month levels. Everyone applying to the school takes a Musical Ability Placement (MAP) test to determine which level he or she can start in. Inexperienced students and those who can't read music automatically go into the Level 1 Foundations program, which Maria Martinez describes as a very intensive six-month prep course. "In addition to getting students' reading skills together," she explains, "Level 1 includes a styles primer, where they are exposed to everything from '50s rock, early New Orleans jazz, and Latin to progressive rock and modern jazz. The primer introduces the rhythmic feel, as well as some history and cultural background for each style."

MI also offers a degree program culminating in a bachelor of music degree in commercial music. Taught by a specially chosen staff of degree instructors, it takes up to four years to complete. While the bachelor program emphasizes music history, theory, composition, and arranging, MI identifies it as "performance oriented." It also includes degree-specific Live Playing Workshops and classes, as well as access to MI's other performing and learning opportunities.

The ten-week, non-certificate Encore Program is designed especially for players with less time or a more focused area of study. "Encore is popular among MI graduates and experienced pros who want to focus on a particular area of drumming," explains MI representative Steve Lunn. "It also attracts students who have attended other schools such as Berkelee and North Texas State University. They may already have their degree, but they want a hands-on approach that lets them apply what they've learned. For one tuition fee, Encore students can mix and match as many classes as they think they can handle, including courses from any of MI's schools, as well as take private lessons with MI instructors."

You Just Play, Man!

Whichever program you choose, the cornerstone of the MI experience is hands-on learning. "For every core class we have a performance class," explains Gary Hess. "For example, we have a jazz drumming class in a classroom format, along with a couple of different jazz Live Playing Workshops. We have a rock drumming class, and a half dozen different rock LPWs." Basic LPWs cover blues, country, hip-hop, Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, classic rock, hard rock, heavy metal, funk, jazz, and fusion. Other highly specific LPWs focus on the drumming and music of a single artist or band, such as The Beatles, The Police, and James Brown. "If students apply themselves at PIT," Hess concludes, "they will have been exposed to—and played—everything they'll encounter in the real world."

In the daily Live Playing Workshops, an instructor selects a drummer, bassist, guitarist, and/or keyboardist from the various MI schools to play a tune that addresses concepts being taught in the corresponding techniques class. "The cool thing about the LPW," suggests Steve Lunn, "is that even though everybody knows the tune, they've probably never played together before. So to know what's going on, they really have to listen to each other. It really develops

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their ears." Instructors for every instrument observe and critique each performance before selecting another group of musicians. Students learn from the teachers' comments, and by observing different approaches of fellow students.

Distinguished from the ad hoc LPW groups, full bands formed and rehearsed by MI musicians can strut their stuff in weekly performance classes. Each band plays two or three songs in MI's main concert hall. As in LPWs, instructors critique the performance, but here the emphasis is on presentation and communication with the audience. These performances are videotaped, which helps bandmembers analyze and refine their own playing and presentation skills.

Students are also encouraged to perform lesson material in daily technique classes before their fellow students. Combined with the more formal performance classes and LPWs, there are hundreds of opportunities to perform during a year at PIT.

Jeff Bowders emphasizes, "PIT forces you to play in so many different situations—in front of your peers, instructors you respect, or clinicians—you're put in a position where you really have to *perform.* You can be playing great in your practice lab, and then go down to perform in front of people and fall on your butt. But usually that's just because you lack confidence. Suddenly you're in a different environment—not the comfort of your lab—and people are watching. But getting to perform so often helps take the fear factor out of it. It's a big confidence-builder. Even if you screw up, you learn from it, and the next time you go up there you'll know what to do, and what not to do."

Education Not For A Song

Unless your name is Rockefeller or Gates, MI will seem expensive. The going rate is $3,000 per quarter.

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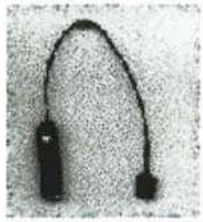

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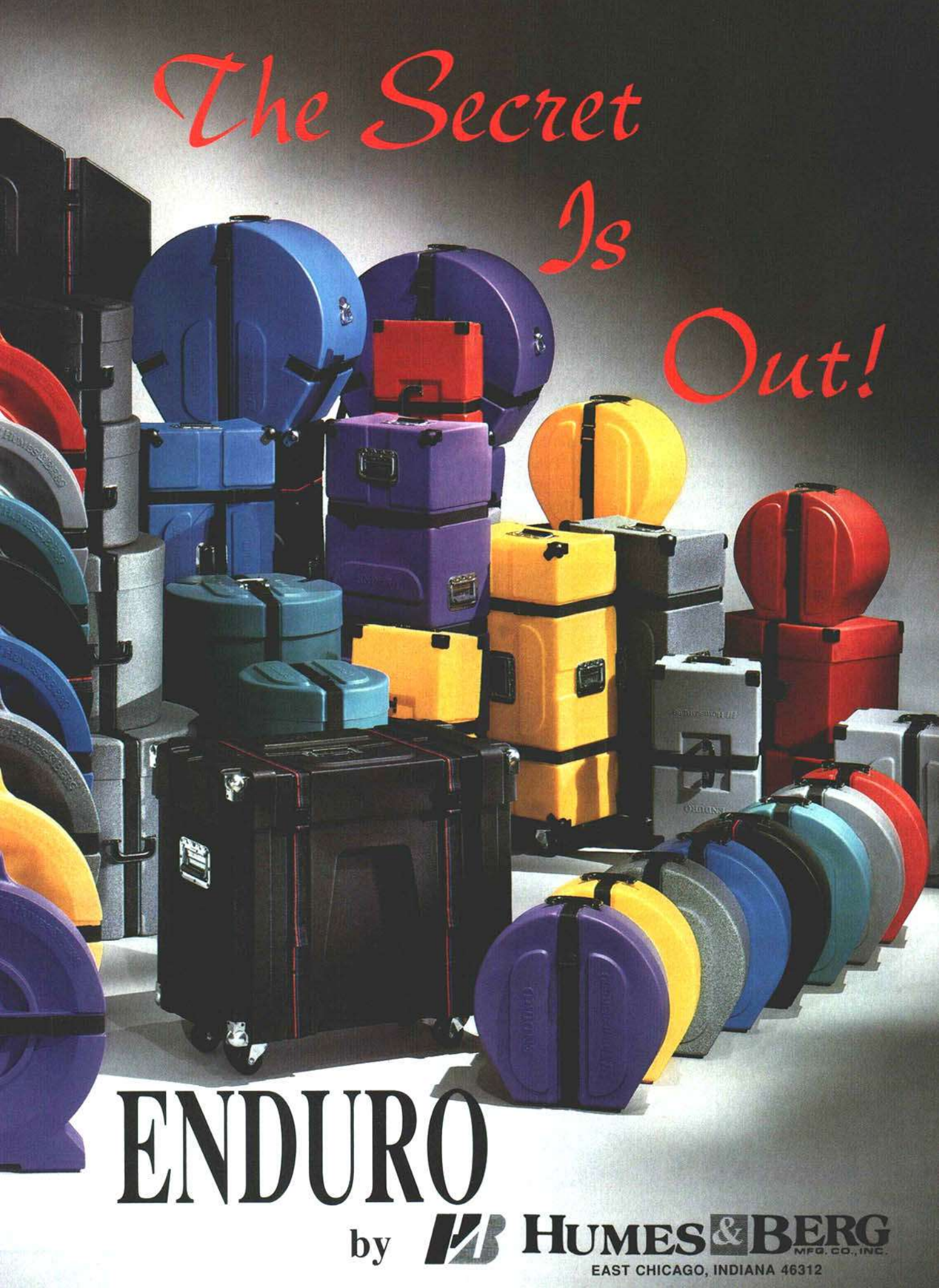
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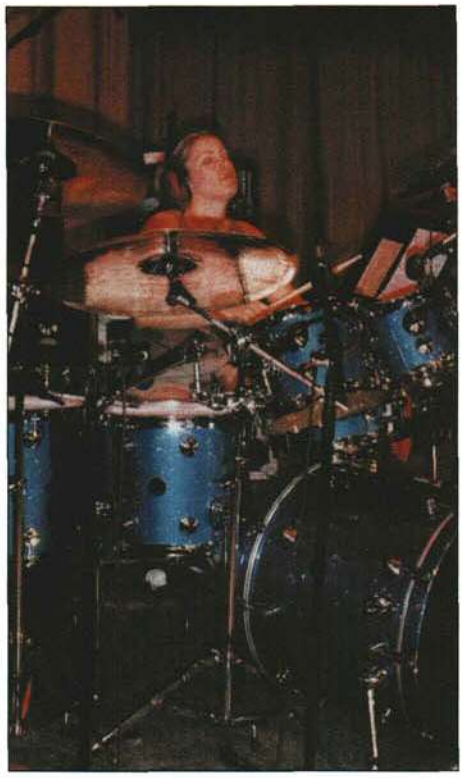
Attack Drumfest '99

On Sunday, September 5, over 900 drummers gathered in the auditorium of Austintown Fitch High School in Austintown, Ohio. The reason for the gathering was two-fold. First, to view performances by four Attack drumhead endorsers—who also happen to be four of today's most talented drummers. Second, to aid people in need as a result of the Kosovo conflict. (Admission to the event was two cans of food, to be sent to Kosovo.)

Coordinated by the staff of Universal Percussion (parent company of Attack Drumheads and Cannon Percussion products), the event was the first of its kind ever staged in northeast Ohio. Drummers traveled from as far away as eastern Pennsylvania, southern Kentucky, and western Wisconsin to attend the show.

And what a show it was. Charlie Adams kicked things off with a bang by playing along to clips taken from Yanni's *Live At The Acropolis* video. It isn't often that you get to see a drummer playing high-energy, odd-time music with a symphony orchestra! Charlie then went on to discuss his playing style, which is a hybrid of big band and "legit percussion" influences combined with extensive experience in the pop/rock field. Charlie brought the crowd to its feet with his concluding drum solo, which featured blazing stick work a la Buddy Rich.

Charlie Adams



Hilary Jones

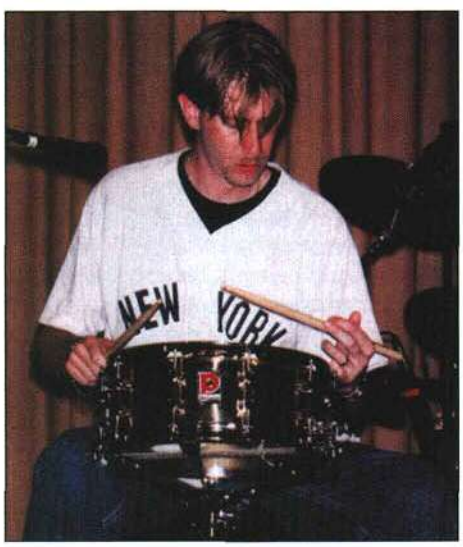
Next up was Hilary Jones, direct from a Japanese tour with guitarist Robben Ford. Best known for her work with Ford, Tribal Tech, Lee Ritenour, and Dave Grusin, Hilary is also a talented composer, a fact proved by some of the self-penned tracks she performed with. Her playing combined tricky meters and impressive technique with solid, funky grooves. Hilary left the crowd impressed with her creativity, deep pocket, and powerful style.

Tommy Igoe came directly to the show via a redeye flight from New Jersey. Nevertheless, he brought with him a wit and energy that delighted the audience. Equally talented as a player and as an educator, Tommy first wowed everybody with a dynamic drum solo. Then he came out in front of the kit to deliver a master class on hand technique (which he constantly spiked with wisecracks that had the crowd in stitches). Tommy concluded by playing to a speedy track that gave him ample opportunity to exercise his considerable skills.

The day's final performer was Terry Bozzio. Seated behind his now-legendary superkit, Terry performed several of his compositions for solo drums. After first establishing a rhythmic foundation with a bass-drum ostinato, Terry employed the vast range of drum and cymbal sounds afforded by his massive kit to provide a rhythmic melody. Most of the drummers in the audience had never seen Terry in live performance. They sat in awe of his ability to combine technique, musicality, and composition into a one-man orchestral achievement on the drums.

Tommy Igoe

The day was brought to a close by a rousing jam featuring all four drummers. Avoiding the "can you top this" approach that sometimes mars such gatherings, Charlie, Hilary, Tommy, and Terry shared the spotlight equally. They focused on listening to each other, taking their turn to shine as they "traded fours" back and forth across the stage. They left the audience with a positive impression of what can happen when genuine professionals perform together.



Based on the success of the 1999 Attack Drumfest, a repeat event for 2000 is under consideration. For further information, contact Universal Percussion, 1431 Heck Rd., Columbiana, OH 44408, tel: (800) 282-0110, fax: (800) 979-3786.

Rick Van Horn

Terry Bozzio

QUICK BEATS: JOEY SHUFFIELD
(FASTBALL)

1) What's your favorite recorded groove played by another drummer?
That would have to be "Fool In The Rain," by my all-time favorite drummer, John Bonham. I just love that song and groove.

2) What disc is in your CD player at the moment?
A band from Dallas called Buck Jones.

3) What's the best concert you ever attended?
Midnight Oil a few years back in Austin, Texas. They were the first band in a long time that made me want to be up in front of the stage. They were great!

4) Do you warm up or do any type of physical exercises before gigs?

I like to go bike riding or jogging in the daytime. I find that it really loosens me up and relaxes me for the gig later that night. (I never do too much to make me sore or tired.)

In Memoriam

Milt Jackson

Editor's note: As we went to press in mid-October 1999 we learned of the death of Milt Jackson at the age of seventy-six. "Bags," as he was known throughout the jazz world, was a legend on the vibraphone. He pioneered the use of extended vibrato, and made the vibes a more expressive instrument. A full *In Memoriam* article dedicated to Milt Jackson will appear in our March 2000 issue.

Kevin Wilkinson

British studio and touring drummer Kevin Wilkinson passed away unexpectedly on July 18, 1999. Though not well-known in the US, Wilkinson had a long and varied career in the UK and Europe.

At the start of the 1980s Kevin was working with guitarist Robert Fripp, The Waterboys, and China Crisis (with whom he recorded four albums and toured the globe extensively). Later, Kevin recorded and toured with former Marillion lead vocalist Fish.

Kevin went on to play for Bonnie Raitt, Scottish band The Proclaimers, and Squeeze. Kevin recorded the latter's *Ridiculous* album and toured extensively as a full member of the band. He also played many BBC dates, including one with James Taylor. Most recently he worked with Howard Jones.

Kevin was a gifted and distinctive drummer. In an interview with *Modern Drummer* in 1989, Neil Peart said, "The drummer [in China Crisis] plays very simple patterns, but what he plays is so elegant and right for the music. When he plays difficult patterns he plays them with such authority that they just flow by you smoothly."

Kevin Wilkinson was forty-one. He leaves behind his wife Marilyn and three children.

QUICK BEATS: STEVE FERRONE

(AVERAGE WHITE BAND, ERIC CLAPTON, TOM PETTY)

1) What are a few of your favorite recorded grooves played by other drummers?

1) Anything on Motown—and all Al Green recordings.
2) "I Saw Her Standing There" by The Beatles, with Ringo on drums, of course. (That was the first song I ever played to.)
3) Miles Davis's "Freedom Jazz Dance," with Tony Williams on drums.
4) James Brown's "Payback" and "Give It Up Or Turnit A Loose," with Clyde Stubblefield.
5) Aretha Franklin's "Rock Steady," with Bernard Purdie.

2) What disc is in your CD player at the moment?

The Best Of Fourplay.

3) What's the best concert you ever attended?

It was Herbie Hancock and his Mwandishi group at the Nice Jazz Festival in 1972. It was a magical night for the musicians and the audience. I know Herbie remembers that particular show because he and I have talked about it. After the first song there was a pause of disbelief from the audience before everyone erupted into applause.

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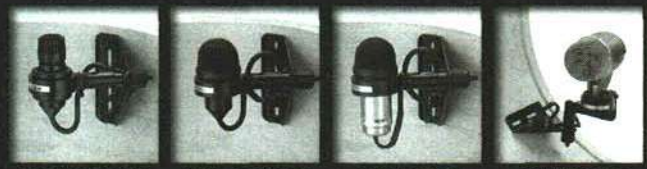

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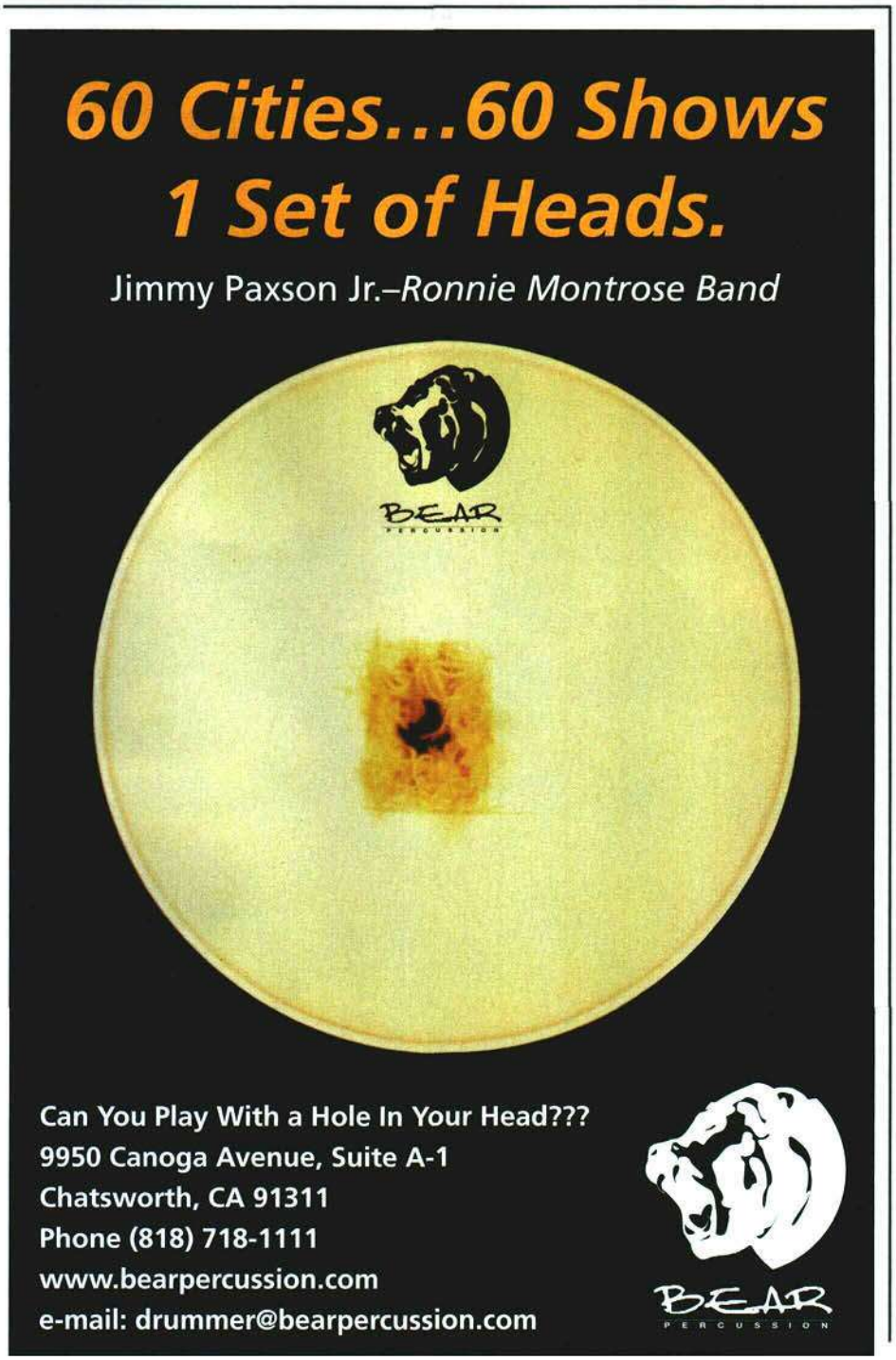
Bozzio Is On Line

Terry Bozzio's personal Web site is now up and running. Information will be updated every few days, and will include the following pages: Forward, TB-Designed Products, Biography, Discography, Gallery, Techniques, Setup, FAQs, Upcoming Tour Schedules, Weekly Update, and CDs, Videos, and Merchandise. Terry invites all interested parties to log on at www.terrybozzio.com.



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Festivals, Upcoming Drum Clinics, Concerts, and Events

Jon Belcher
12/31 — Savoy Swing, Millennium New Year's at the Ranier Club, Seattle, WA. Contact: Jon Belcher, jbgroove@juno.com.

Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival
2/23-26 — Featuring Lionel Hampton, Dianne Reeves, James Moody, The Ray Brown Trio, Roy Hargrove, Lewis Nash, David Sanchez, and many more. Ticket info: (888)-8UIDAHO, (208) 885-6765.

Latin Jazz
1/28 — Michel Camilo Trio & Paquito D'Rivera, Union Congregational Church, 176 Cooper Avenue, Upper Montclair, NJ, (973) 746-6068.

Jonathan Mover
12/13 — Online chat 10:00 P.M. EST, log on for details, www.stickhead.com

National Association for Music Education
3/8-11 — Conference, workshops, clinics, and performances, Washington, DC. For info & registration call (800) 828-0229.

Percussion Extravaganza 2000
3/12 — Jazz vibist Dave Samuels returns as a guest artist with the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, along with percussionist Dave Friedman. They will be joined by Milton Cardona and Mark Walker for an all percussion performance. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark, NJ, (973) 746-6068.

Philadelphia Music Conference
1/19-22 — Keynote addresses, panels, exhibitions, showcases, special guest, Philadelphia, PA. Contact David Rath, dave@gopmc.com or (215) 587-9178.

Steve Smith
1/10 — Online chat, 10:00 P.M. EST, log on for details, www.stickhead.com.

Doug Tann
12/4 — Professional Music Technology, Southend, Essex, UK, 2:30 P.M.

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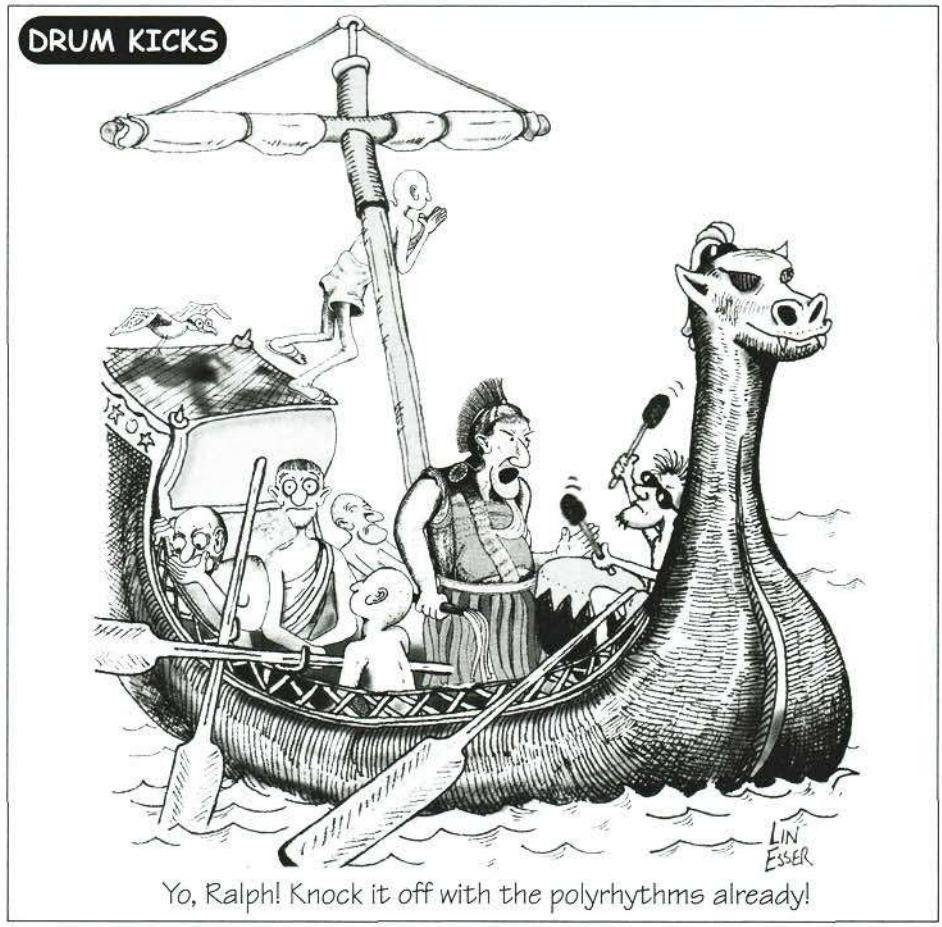

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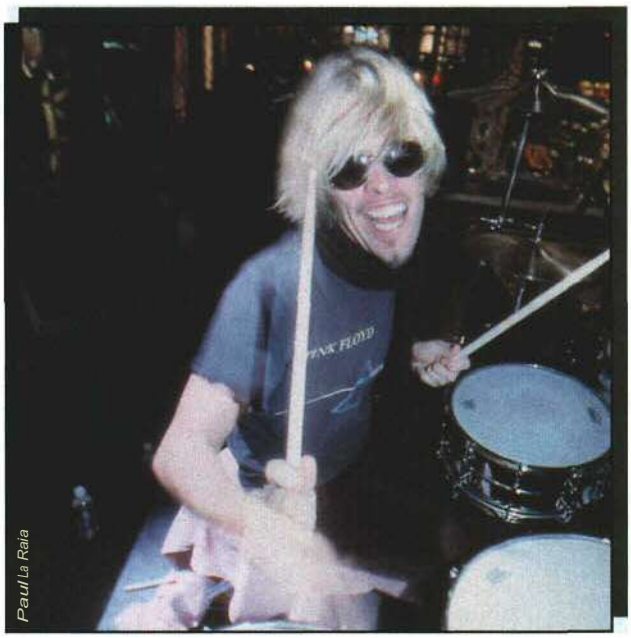

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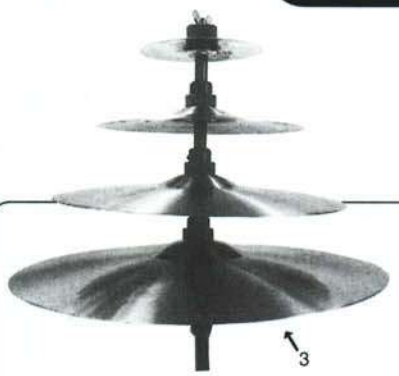

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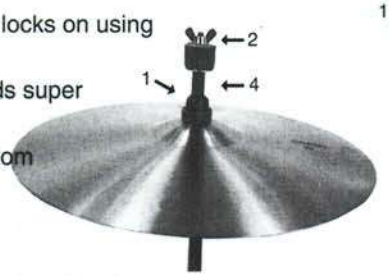

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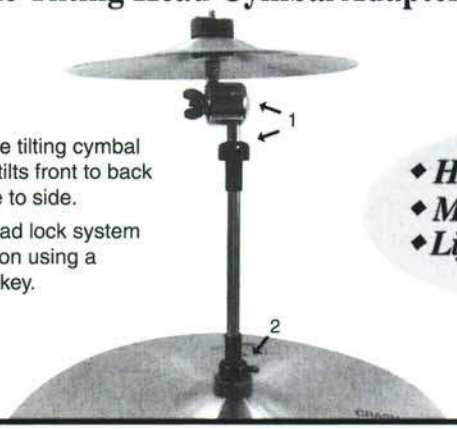

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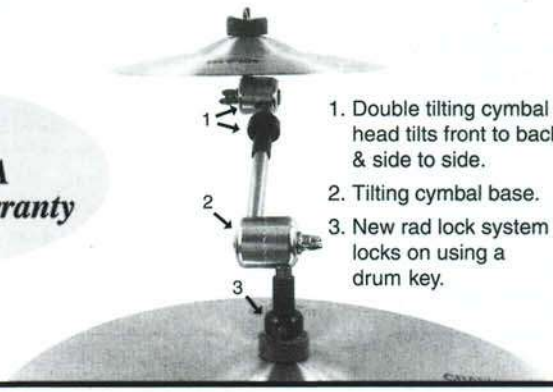

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"The kit has double-hooped rims, as if for calfskin heads—although I've fitted the drums with Remo FiberSkyn 3s. A new spare snare head (not shown) was with the kit, in a tattered box stenciled with 'Frank's Drum Shop, Chicago, Ill.'

"The wood shells are about 9-ply; the darker rims are of mahogany. The drums tune quite well, via bolts through the wooden rims. The lugs are made of some sort of composite material that is drillable and tapable and quite strong. The tom mounts are of solid brass, bolted together with the same composite as the lugs. The snare drum head and the ride cymbal are both stamped "Roxy, Western Germany," but could be aftermarket items. The rest of the cymbals and the bells are hand-made. Cymbal supports are made of spun aluminum.

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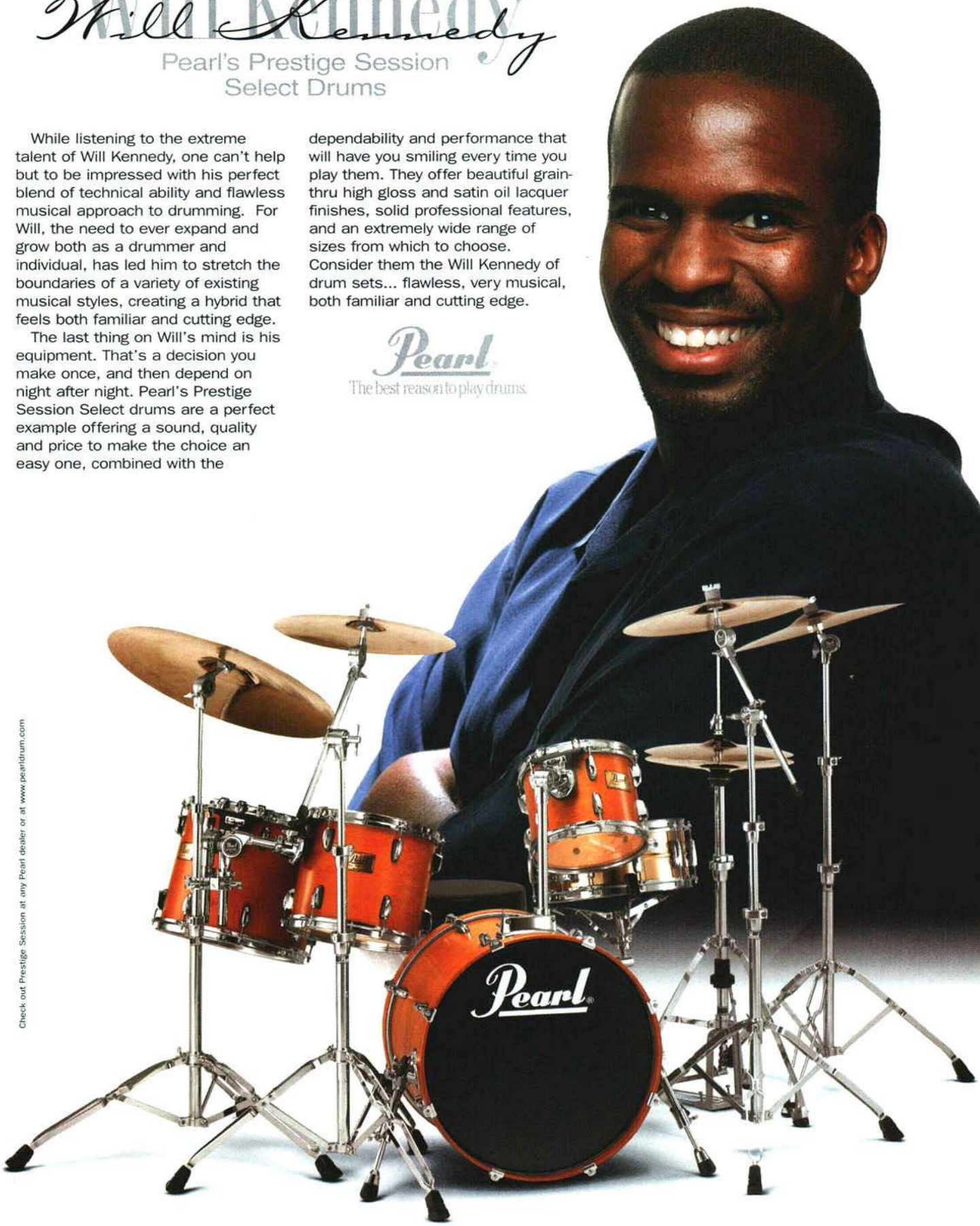

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